

THE



DIAL

NOVEMBER 1923

LETTERS FROM W. H. HUDSON

TO EDWARD GARNETT¹

Martin

by Salisbury,

17th. [April 1903]

Dear Garnett

There will be another Tuesday when I shall not see you as I don't think of returning just yet. The loneliness of this little downland village suits my nerves. We are 3 miles from a telegraph office, 7 miles from a butcher, a doctor and a newspaper, and there is no public house so it is all dark and still after 8 o'clock and everyone goes to bed. The only light is from the stars and the only sound the faint far off tinkle of sheep-bells. It is a land of great open downs, sheep-walks, and with no sheep on them yet, as it is early in the year and the weather cold, and the sheep are still kept down in the valleys feeding on "turmots" and such things. Peewits, magpies, rabbits and such creatures are the only people I meet in my long rambles on the hills. In spite of the cold winds and frosts by night the furze is now in full bloom—a chaos of shining yellow blossoms, and the mossy turf below blue with dog violets. Before coming this way I was at Salisbury and almost lived in the Cathedral for two or three days because it was the only comfortable sheltered place I could find. One warm day we had, and that was on Good Friday, and that day I spent in the prehistoric Cathedral

¹ These seven letters are selected from a correspondence stretching over twenty years: 1901-1922.—E. G.

NOTE: We print the letters exactly as W. H. Hudson wrote them, although the spelling and punctuation occasionally do not conform to our usage.

—Stonehenge. I was one night at Fordingbridge and paid a visit to a farmer I know in that neighbourhood, and then came up into this lonely place. When I enquired for a place to stay in people stared at me and smiled at so preposterous a request. But looking about I found a Carter and his wife who took me in. The carter's wages is 12/—a week so you wouldn't think it a very luxurious lodging but you would be mistaken. His "cottage" is an ancient farm-house—timbered and thatched with large rambling rooms, brick floors, big fireplaces, the biggest room, the one I am in, with a wooden ceiling. Besides the old house they have a big old barn, 20 old apple trees, and 6 acres of meadow-land. They keep pigs and 50 or 60 fowls, and the house is beautifully clean inside, linen like snow, and the woman an excellent cook. The reason of it all is that she was in service several years in a great house when being pretty quick and willing to learn she found out how to do things and keep her place nice. Rents here are almost nominal and the landlord who owns the village is very generous. The book-case is over my head, where I am sitting by a big wood fire: It has two very small shelves, and the following works are all it contains: *Pilgrim's Progress*: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Miss Edgeworth's "Helen,"* *East Lynne*, *The Wide Wide World*—which I read once and that was enough—*Science for Boys and Girls* (edited by Kingsley), *Our Village*, *Waterton's Wanderings* and *Marianne North's "Recollections of a Happy Life"*—a curious work to find in such a place! Altogether a wonderful little collection of "Best Books"—far better than Lubbock's I imagine.

And now I am on books—did you see last week's *Academy*, and did you read the review of Traherne's poems which Dobell has unearthed and published? And if you did do you agree with the reviewer? I read it at Salisbury and sent it on to Mrs. Hubbard and this is what she writes to me:—"thanks for the *Academy*, which I have been reading with more interest than agreement. . . . In bracketing Vaughan with Herbert I should put H. decidedly first. As far as the idea of childhood goes with the three, though Vaughan may get nearer the heart of it than Herbert, yet with both the main point is to use childhood as a luminous background for the black derelictions of after life. Whereas Traherne takes the glory of it, as Blake does, on its own account, with no ulterior motives. He does not utilize it, but triumphs in it. Andrew Marvell had some-

thing of that joy and wonder in living, &c." I quite agree with her: I think that first poem in the book—The Salutation—one of the most wonderful things ever written.

18th. I was interrupted and couldn't finish last evening, so another day has gone by during which I sat down in a wood and gazed on a splendid red fox, then had a talk with a gamekeeper, who is eaten up with magpies. Then I spent an hour in the grand old church of Cranborne, full of monuments to persons of importance in their day and in their parish: and finally I got to a strange out-of-the-world little village called Edmunsham—pronounced Edsham. There is a well on a wide green place there and half the women and all the children were congregated at it, the women with big white sun-bonnets, with great old brown earthenware pitchers to get their water. They were like Ancient Britons and made such a hubbub and gave me so many directions when I asked my way to Damerham—called Dam-ron, that I failed to understand, and went how I could over miles of furzy common and by lanes until I found Dam-ron, and then on to Martin.

I shall stay here till Tuesday next and then get back to Salisbury, and visit villages on the Wylie river before returning next week.

With love to all.

Yours

W. H. HUDSON

3 June. [1903]

Dear Garnett,

So much time have I spent in these parts I fear I shall not see Dorset this time. Up till now I have not been about my own business, but running after County Councillors, and they are elusive birds and hard I find it to put salt on their flying tails. I am now going to Salisbury—in fact I'll post this letter there before 10 this evening so that you will not know where it was written in spite of the address being there plain enough. I have had some days at Marlborough, not a bad place, a small old red brick town with a High Street a hundred feet wide. I was in the forest two or three times and a few of the villages near. At Grafton I went to see a

nice woman of 55, who was born blind and has a curious history. Her father was an illegitimate son blind from birth, but a fine handsome man, remarkably clever, who built a business in the village and married a nice woman and had 9 children. But all were born blind. They all grew up and lived until about 30 or 35 and then one by one died, except this one—Miss M. Miss M's mother, they say, was a woman of a very beautiful character and very religious. When her children were growing up and the family were all happy and healthy and prosperous in spite of so much blindness, an old friend of the wife told her a secret which she had kept in her breast for many years: it was that she—Mrs. M. and her husband were children of the same father, this so affected the poor woman's mind that she lost her reason and died in an asylum. Do you know Melksham? I found it a little town of stone instead of brick like the others, and was reminded that it is near Bath in a stone-producing district. Not far from Melksham is Trowbridge, another nice little old town where I have been twice lately in search of a person I wanted to see. One day while waiting I went to pass an idle hour in the church and when idly gazing at a marble mural tablet on which a dying priest with a Roman nose, surrounded by his sorrowing friends, is sculptured the name of George Crabbe under it arrested my attention. Yes, it was the poet's monument: he was vicar of Trowbridge 18 years until 1832 when he died. The old verger then told me this story—has it ever been printed? During some repairs in this part of the building one of the workmen broke open Crabbe's grave and carried off the skull, which he sold to a publican in the town for half a crown. He had it for some time, then a Mr. Foley, a wealthy man of the town, hearing about it, got the head and had it reburied, but not with the body. It was placed in a casket made specially for it and buried by itself within the wall just under the tablet. If you will send me a line addressed to Post Office, Martin, Salisbury.

With kindest regards,

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

Martin

Salisbury.

June 11. [1903]

My dear Garnett

I'm here till Tuesday next but shall not be in London soon enough to see you next week. Many thanks for writing: I shall be curious to see your paper in the *H. Review*¹ and only fear you have been too generous—that there will be honey on the rim of the cup but not any bitter taste in the liquor. I have a letter from Graham in which he speaks of the Academy's review of my book, and says that "Garnett" probably wrote it. I have written to say that I have not seen it, as I do not get any reviews sent but that *you did not write it*.

Talking of Life-histories—in the neighbourhood of the village where I visited the blind woman one very hot day I went over a vast down to the village of Oare, and on the hill top got off and sat in the shade to rest not far from a small lonely cottage. A very old grey woman and a very small boy came out and took a long look at me, and by and by the small boy came and presented me with a spray of Southern-wood, and began to prattle telling me incidentally his little life history. He appeared to be one of those whose origin is "wrop in mystery." A more beautiful little boy I have not seen: he was 6 years old and that old bent woman, he said, was his mother! His father was "a very old man," a farm labourer, at Mr. Young's Farm. They kept no pig but they had a yellow cat—only it was lost now. He went to school at Oare—all down hill, and then all up hill to come back. The other small boys plagued him but he always hit back so hard that they were beginning to leave him alone. His sister Susan had 3 children, and Fanny two. And he had a brother—a great fat man, who lived in London, but they knew nothing about him. Mother knew, but she wouldn't tell. His father's name was "Mr. Kent." "And what's your name?" I asked. He drew himself up, took a very deep breath and said, "My name is Henry Jasper George Hicks Hallam." It was a fine name, I said, but why was he Hallam and his father Kent? "I have two fathers," he said—"Mr. Kent and Mr. Hallam."

On Sunday evening I had to go to Lyndhurst—some 24 miles

¹ The Nature Books of W. H. Hudson. *Humane Review*. June 1903.—E. G.

from Martin—and did not return until Tuesday afternoon. A funny business took me to that unbeloved place—something to do—odd to say—with a review of my book: but the subject is not worth going into just now. On my way back I crossed that wild lonely street of pine and heath between Cadnam and Godshill where you see no house for a distance of about 7 miles, and where I encountered but two souls. One was a black cock—the first bird of the kind I have seen in Hampshire. He rose before me from the heath at the road side and fled away in proud style. The other was a very tall fine looking old man sitting by the roadside smoking his peaceful pipe in the wilderness. I sat down and had a long talk with him. He was born close by, he told me, at a small village near Fordingbridge. In the sixties he went out to America and listed and went through the war; then got land on the upper Mississippi, and married and worked hard for many years cultivating his land. It was flat marshy land and he worked too hard and [?] ague and had bad health generally. Then he lost his wife and 2 children, and fell himself into consumption. One of his lungs was completely gone. Then he came home to end his days in his old native place among his kindred; but after 2 years more of suffering began to mend, and finally got perfectly well and strong. Now he works as a Road-mender and roams up and down the roads that cross the heath on an old tricycle with his spade and pick and other tools.

To judge from Blunt's own work—from this "New Pilgrimage," the series of sonnets telling of his own varied life and occupation, or rather amusements, you are perfectly right in what you say of him. He has had "too good a time."

The Daily News is the paper I have oftenest seen in the country, and Belloc and Chesterton have been in it a good deal. I am so free from the—*vice* of cleverness myself that I am not very tolerant of it in others. Perhaps here I—

Compound for sins I am inclined to
By damning those I have no mind to.

B. amuses me, but irritates as well, and when I read C. I am inclined to exclaim with the young fellow after witnessing the old man's feat of balancing an eel on his nose—"What made you so wonderfully clever?" Perhaps he writes too much—perhaps a

reputation for cleverness and paradox is bad for a man—a sort of “heritage of woe” as Law said.

Pardon this long screed—my excuse must be that it is raining. Poor little David!—but we have all had that sad experience in some degree—to lose our own selves; but to boys sent far from home to public schools for instance, it must sometimes be terrible. Tell him, to console him, that by and by or in some future time he will find it again—that it will seem all the more precious and beautiful then.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Garnett,

Yours ever

W. H. HUDSON

3 Mansfield Cottage

Hunstanton

Norfolk.

17 Aug. [1904]

Dear Garnett

How, I wonder, are you and yours? I hope Mrs. Garnett has been benefited, and I suppose David has been thoroughly Russianized. I ought to have written to you before—when I came here—for then I could have expected a line from you by now. We came here a week ago and arrived on a pouring wet day and were told that there was not a room to be had in the place. We tried the hotels and they were full up, but after trudging about in the rain and wind for some hours we “happened” on this cottage, a small old house built of yellow-brown c——stone, and luckily the people they had had had just left. (3 hads). The landlady is a poor tall pale gaunt woman with a large nose, very sad looking, with one boy of ten her only family. Her furniture was rather poor, and her terms low, so we only took it by the day. But this poor soul is a most interesting human being and we shall stay here all the time. She is the daughter of a farmer near Lyne, and twelve years ago married a mold man who took her to his town and was a drunkard and bad fellow in all ways; so she took her boy and left him and came back to her own country to make her living and her boys. She is in spite of her ungainly outside a most worthy and even lovable person, and her boy a curiously interesting little fellow, very grave

and serious, passionately fond of reading—history adventure—and geology. He possesses Hugh Millar's works, and when his mother takes a days holiday the two with their dinner in a basket go miles away along the coast and spend the day together on the sands hunting for fossils at that point where there is an old submerged forest, where branches and bits of amber and bones and shells are washed up on the beach. The weather has been very bad since we came, only yesterday we had half a day of calm and sunshine. Monday we spent at Lyne, one of the most charming old towns I have ever seen—one would like to live in it and forget the very name of Progress and be at peace. It is altogether an interesting country, but the Norfolk people are not attractive—they are to my mind the most ungraceful unprepossessing people in England. Here, at Hunstanton, at the height of its short season, the people that fill the place are from Leicester, Bedford, Lincoln and several Midland towns: very few Londoners. They are very nice looking people of Saxon type: the children wonderfully fine-looking, with very light hair, and many of the women large and fine, placid and cow-like for all their blue eyes. They are of course the well-to-do people of the towns they come from, Hunstanton being an expensive place to stay at. You are, I am afraid, more interested in humans than in birds. 'Tis the other way about with me; but I am not well enough to go the long distances one needs to walk to see the shore birds properly. A few days ago there were a few small flocks of sandpipers, at different points along the beach where we were walking—knots, dunlins, dotterell (dotterel) and [?]. We stood some time watching one small flock at a distance of forty yards. I remarked to my wife that they were always very tame when they arrived at this season on the British coast, on their way back from the arctic regions: "If you want to see their wingmarkings you must make them fly." So she walked to them and got to within *eight yards* before they rose up and flew a few yards off and alighted again. There is no shooting yet here, and one would think that man and birds had made peace.

I'm rather ashamed to send you this long screed about nothing. I daresay we shall be a week longer here. I've had no proofs yet.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Garnett and David.

Yours

W. H. HUDSON

40 St. Luke's Road, W.

Jan. 6. '14.

Dear Garnett

The Book you sent, Major's Early-Sussex has an appetising look but I hav'nt been able to look at it yet (except the preface) so must lie on the table until I can take it up or until you want it back to lend to someone in a hurry. The Mrs. Wharton¹ I've also put down after a few chapters—for the present. You didn't say enough in your review: you damned the people described in the book—the social state that can produce such creatures—and they certainly are detestable, or would be if one could believe that Mrs. Wharton is a true seer. Nothing in any of them to love or reverence or pity or forgive; no beauty, sweetness, pathos; but they are all like people made of zinc with their characters painted in big black letters on their surfaces so that there shall be no mistake. To read her book is like coming into a drawingroom, such as are common nowadays, overlighted with dozens of electric lights—all a hard blinding glare with no faintest spot of shade anywhere. I was going to say the only writer in England she could be likened to is Frank Danby. But it would be an insult to Mrs. Frankau: detestable as most of her people are they are human, and even Dr. Phillips of Maida Vale, the worst of the lot who poisons his invalid wife for the sake of his mistress, moves one's compassion as any real human being does. However I can't suppose you had any motive in sparing her notwithstanding her dog-like fidelity (if that is the right word) to the master Henry James. To go back to the subject I started with: I've had too many books tumbled upon me the last few days, including Frazer's last two vols—Balder the Beautiful. (You may want to read it some day.) But I've neglected them all to read a 3 penny book I picked up on a cheap stall a few days ago—Leigh Hunt's autobiography. Oddly enough I've known L. H. since I was fourteen or fifteen, when owing to being struck down with a fever which made me a prisoner for a couple of months, I first began to look at books. Some of his books were on the shelves. But I never knew till now that he had written his own life. As an autobiography it has serious faults but it charms and disarms me especially the early chapters and most of all those about his mother. What a marvellously beautiful picture he gives

¹ The Custom of the Country. By Edith Wharton.—E. G.

of her! Well, she was an American and must have been strangely like my mother, who was also American, and Hunt's mother's people were loyalists while my mother's forbears were furiously anti-English from the very beginning of the discontent which ended in the Revolution. The Hunts were very poor when he was a small boy, and he relates that one night he was with his mother somewhere in the vicinity of Blackfriars' bridge when a wretched woman begged of them. His mother had no money to give but she told the woman to follow her and going into a small dark side street divested herself of the flannel petticoat and gave it to her. It was bitterly cold and rheumatism and long illness followed as a result of her action. Well, my mother did very many things far far greater than that. I remember after her death going into a native ranche one day, and the old woman of the house over eighty, got up from the stool where she sat over the fire and said, with the tears running from her eyes, "She always called me Mother when she came to see me, but she was my mother and the mother of us all and what shall we do now she has gone?" How many men—tens and hundreds of thousands of men—could say as much as you and I and Leigh Hunt of a mother whose memory they worship: but all this has no existence in the world of certain fictionists whose fictions are invariably hailed by the reviewers as the "real thing," as "true to life" and all that.

Well, this is a long enough screed. As for what you say about criticising one's friends of course I don't take it seriously: it is just your fun—an attempt to draw me out. If I were to take it seriously how if I were to ask you by way of retort—what would you say of the man on the bench who allowed his judgments to be swayed by his personal likes and dislikes? I take it that morally the reviewer of books is in the position of the man on the bench, that his brain and not his heart must decide and he has only to judge justly—and "damn the consequences."

Ever yours

W. H. HUDSON

23 North Parade
Penzance.

May 29. [1920]

Dear Garnett

I am now sending you the story¹ which you see is the old historical one of Edgar and Elfrida, a subject most unsuitable for me, which was forced on me so to speak, and so I should not be surprised to hear that I am *out* [?] of it here and that it is no good. Well, you will tell me, and all I can say is I will not rewrite it as I've now finished with it and very glad too, as I should have preferred one of my own natural history subjects—the book I had half written before I came down in fact. But when I came down I put some old envelopes, each containing some notes I had made on some subjects which had interested me at one time. I thought it best to bring them down and look over them to destroy most of them as now useless when I turned out and looked at the Edgar and E. note I had made years ago. I thought I might just try to make a little thing of three or four thousand words and get rid of it in that way instead of destroying it. But the confounded subject would not let me go until I had made this long short story which runs to over 21,000 words. And now I'm fairly sick of it and can do nothing beyond mending any glaringly wrong passage. But you will tell me about that. I want it back in a few days if you can look at it soon, as it is just possible that I may be able to go up pretty soon. I haven't got much benefit from being here, though the London winter would perhaps have carried me off before now if I hadn't got away in November. I haven't been over to St. Ives yet, nor to the Land's End, nor anywhere outside of Penzance as I haven't felt well enough for anything.

What I feel about this thing is that I haven't succeeded in producing the effect aimed at in the character of the woman as the whole and sole interest is in that—the woman who was capable of a horrible crime and who was yet essentially noble in spirit. But as to its being a story of a thousand years ago, that doesn't matter at all seeing that human passions then were what they are today and always, and all the archaeology stuff is left out. You must say Use it or Burn it and I'll obey.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

¹ Dead Man's Plack.—E. G.

23 North Parade
Penzance.

June 2. '20.

Dear Garnett

Very many thanks for your helpful letter. I had seen when correcting the MS. that a lot of sentences and phrases ought to come out—and that Fisher allusion and things like that. But about style—the moment it looks artificial it revolts me. I have never conquered my dislike of Morris because of his Saxon words. You did not notice, I dare say, as I don't use quotation marks, that the concluding words of my Preamble are a quote from him. "Without external aid or compulsion, I say I could not make shadows breathe, restore the dead and know what silent mouths once said." Well, why didn't he stick to his own principle and make the last line: And know what mouths now dumb once said?

I suppose it was because his own diction without a Latin word thrown in here and there was too distressing even to himself. If you have ever succeeded in wading through the five huge volumes of the *Earthly Paradise* you must have had a sickness of that kind of writing. I'm glad you like the passages I like and think [best]. I sent a copy to Morley Roberts at the same time and *he* says those are the wrong passages—that *Elfrida's* monologues must all be cut short to make the story better.

I hope to go up next week and you will perhaps be able to come somewhere and lunch with me. Today I went to Godolphin to visit the Rector there, who last year when I was here was a poor curate with not enough to live on at St. Erths. As he is a queer unconventional fellow I wanted to congratulate him. He told me of a strange man who had spent thirty-two years in Patagonia, living near Godolphin, and as I wished to see him we went off and paid him a visit. He had lived in *Tierra del Fuego* and on the Straits of Magellan and among the Andes, and also at the Rio Negre and knew all my old friends there. I asked him why he didn't write his adventures. He said he would get out pen and paper and start writing them right away as soon as I left! But poor man, he is past it, I fear, at seventy-eight after spending twenty years in Cornwall since he came home.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

P. S. Ethelbold is one of about twenty variants of the name: I chose Athelwold as it was Humes choice in his history and is most familiar.

I asked Jenner—the old Brit. Museum man who lives down here, the meaning of *Plack* but he couldn't say and was disturbed in mind as he professes to know every English and Saxon word. Nor had he ever heard of the tradition of Athelwold's death in Hampshire.

I tell plainly enough where it is—Wherwell, a village on the Test, and the Forest of Harewood is close by, on the Andover side. About 2,000 acres of the original Forest remain till now, and the owner, the lord of the manor is Iremonger, and it was one of that family who put up the cross some 80 or 90 years ago at Dead Man's Plack. Probably it means Dead man's *place*. Elfrida built her monastery at the village where Athelwold's castle had stood, and it continued down to the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. But it was once partly destroyed during the horrible wars of Stephen and Maud. But the stone walls remained intact I suppose after it was burnt, as it continued as a nunnery after the wars. And it *exists still*—or partly exists and is the dwelling house of the Earls of Lovelace:—the present man is Byron's great grandson I fancy. It is in the histories that Elfrida took the veil there and died there. And some say it is still haunted by her ghost.

I was going to put that in a note at the end—but it would be actionable as you are not allowed to say such things. But it was rather an impressive ghost.

THE PHILOSOPHER KWANG

BY JOHN COWPER POWYS

THE older texts of Taoism, as we get them translated by James Legge in Max Muller's Sacred Books of the East, make up but a small fraction of the two volumes in the Oxford Edition devoted to this cult. The larger portion of both these fascinating books is filled with the writings of Kwang-tze, the "laughing philosopher" of the kingdom of Liang.

The earlier texts are arresting enough to any mystical-minded person; but one cannot help feeling, as one turns these pages, that the real genius of the Taoist tradition is not the legendary Lao-tze, its portentous prophet, but the much more whimsical and irresponsible Kwang, its Voltairian high-priest.

This extraordinary and imaginative man of letters lived, it appears, about three and a half centuries before Christ and about two centuries after Lao-tze and Confucius.

For some mysterious reason, however, Kwang, compared with his great forerunners, still lacks the homage, still lacks the intellectual recognition, that seems his due. And yet the quality of his thought strikes us as more original, as more imaginative, than that of either Lao-tze or Confucius. Perhaps it is that his chaos-loving thought besieges our purer reason and—it may well be—corrupts it, in the very manner against which the whole elaborate ritual of the Confucian ethics was especially directed!

Very little is known of Kwang's life. He appears to have guarded his freedom from official responsibility with a Montaignesque sagacity; for when a certain monarch sent messengers with large gifts to bring him to Court his response is characteristic of his habits of mind, both in its rudeness and in its quaint gaiety:

"Have you seen the victim-ox for the sacrifice? It is fed and robed to enter the temple. When the time comes for it to do so, it would prefer to be a little pig; but it cannot get to be so. Go away! Do not soil me with your presence! I would rather enjoy myself in a filthy ditch than be subject to court regulations."

The most characteristic quality in Kwang's writings is his peculiar sense of humour. This humour is something quite unique in literature; and more than unique to our Western minds!

No doubt other Chinese classics approximate to its penetrating flavour; but I doubt whether they attain it. It is certainly unmistakably Chinese in its quips and turns; but it is also—surely one cannot be mistaken here—redolent of a certain saltish, turpentine-like pungency which is native to Kwang alone.

Everything that it approaches is given a little twist, a little turn, a perceptibly new taste in the mouth. It is the body and pressure of Kwang's whole mental vision. It is at once his rebellion against what is intolerable in life and his way of escaping into a freer world.

The closeness of the connexion between Kwang's humour and Kwang's thought can be seen in his mania for the heterogeneous and the casual, as contrasted with the homogeneous and the inevitable. His philosophy is nothing more nor less than a worship of chaos, tempered by a sly and crafty salutation to whatever "Unutterable"—beyond all Monism and all Pluralism—may lie behind chaos!

His humour therefore delights to concentrate itself upon the most disconnected and inconsequential details; isolating such details arbitrarily and at random; and yet managing to squeeze out of them a pungent metaphysical sap.

One might indeed compare the humour of Kwang to the fantastic hoppings of a whimsical long-necked bird, who every now and then stands gravely upon some object or another, one thin leg curled up under its tail, with its head and beak twisted grotesquely to one side, and makes its comment on the motley world! The Confucian superiorities of Benevolence and Righteousness, with the rather meticulous moral system which they imply, prove a most provocative source of merriment to this "queer son of chaos."

He is never weary of girding at the "Know-Alls" of life:

"Men all honour that which lies within the sphere of their knowledge, but they do not know their dependence on what lies outside that sphere;—may we not call their case one of great perplexity? Ah! Ah! There is no escaping from this dilemma. So it is! So it is!"

The whimsicality of Kwang's bird-like hoppings through the peat-bogs of chance assumes sometimes an enchanting picturesqueness; but this picturesqueness always seems to float and drift like moon-lit sea-weed upon a bottomless ocean of mystery. The following passage, for example, is almost word for word a parallel to William Blake's famous distinction between the power that creates and the eye that records. It is interesting to note, however, the difference between Blake's tempestuous anger with the unimaginative and the querulous, supercilious little sigh with which Kwang dismisses the subject:

"He who uses only the sight of the eyes is acted on by what he sees; it is the intuition of the spirit that gives the assurance of certainty. And yet stupid people rely on what they see, and will have it to be the sentiment of all men;—all their success being with what is external—is it not sad?"

There are many passages in these volumes that compel us to think of Nietzsche's Zarathustra; but the terror of that silver bow is always grandiose and Olympian; whereas the rogueries of Kwang remain rusticated, quizzical, irresponsible, as if Pan himself were scratching little moral vignettes on the bark of the beech-trees, indulging now and again in a skip of his goat-shanks when his mischiefs especially tickle his fancy.

"Tung-kwo asked Kwang, saying, 'Where is what you call the Tao to be found?' Kwang replied, 'Everywhere.' The other said, 'Specify an instance of it—that will be more satisfactory.' 'It is here in this ant.' 'Give a lower instance.' 'It is in this panic-grass.' 'Give a still lower instance.' 'It is in this earthenware tile.' 'Surely that is the lowest instance?' 'It is in that excrement!' To this Tung-kwo gave no reply."

But there are passages too, where, as in some piece of discordant Russian music, we grow conscious of a singular trembling of the veil of Isis:

"Starlight asked Non-entity, saying, 'Master, do you exist? Or do you not exist?' He got no answer to his question, however, and looked steadfastly to the appearance of the other, which was that

of a deep void. All day long he looked to it but could hear nothing; he clutched at it but got hold of nothing. Starlight then said, 'Perfect! Who can attain to this? Non-existing non-existence; and non-existing existence! How is it possible to reach to this? Perfect!'

It is a very nice and a very delicate question though one obviously beyond the scope of this sketch, whether the great doctrine of the Tao was actually modified by Kwang; whether in fact, Kwang's Tao departs from the original and orthodox Tao. One suspects that it does depart from this not a little; but Kwang has so plausible a manner of presenting his own temperamental vision that it is very hard to catch him in the act of "glossing" the older oracles.

For our part we are unable to see why the Taoism of Kwang should not be a finer and a deeper philosophy than the Taoism of Lao-tze. It is certainly more daring and more amusing. The Tao probably had interpreters long before Lao-tze appropriated it; and it may well be that what are called the "Classical Texts of Taoism" represent a philosophical articulation of a much more primitive and mythological cult, towards which the poetic imagination of Kwang fumbles its own way.

His doctrine of the Tao remains in any case, as it is disclosed to us in these extraordinary pages, a piece of human speculation that may be enjoyed on its own merits. What it seems to reveal is nothing less than what may well have been the religion of the human race in some incredibly early period of its history; the worship in plain words, of Chaos and Chance, combined with an awful recognition of Something Unutterable—neither to be named as Existence nor as Nothingness, neither as the One nor as the Many—out of the womb of which Chaos and Chance emerged and into which they will sink.

It is the underlying presence of this Unutterable—a different thing altogether from the Hindu Brahma—which makes it possible for Kwang to speak as if Life and Death themselves were only temporary aspects of something that was beyond them both, and as if neither Benevolence nor Righteousness could ever reach that depth of clairvoyance which the mere "lying back" upon one's own essential nature, such as it may be, in unmitigated simplicity and sincerity, can enable us to attain.

Certain enchanting dialogues between mysterious figures that seem to resemble those dehumanized persons that one sees on china tea-cups, take place now and again. We will condense one of these for the reader's benefit:

"Knowledge had rambled northwards to the region of the Dark Water where he ascended the Imperceptible Slope, when it happened that he met Dumb Inaction. He addressed him, saying, 'How do we know the Tao? Where do we find our rest in the Tao? Where is the path to the Tao?' Dumb Inaction gave him no reply. Not only did he not answer; but he did not know how to answer. Knowledge then ascended the height of the End of Doubt where he saw Heedless Blurter, to whom he put his questions. Heedless Blurter replied at once, 'Ah! I know and I will tell you.' But while he was about to speak, he forgot what he wanted to say. Knowledge returned to the palace of Ti and he saw Hwang-ti, and Hwang-ti said, 'To dwell nowhere and to do nothing is the first step; to start from nowhere and pursue no path is the first step—Dumb Inaction was truly right because he did not know the thing. Heedless Blurter was nearly right because he forgot it. I and you are not nearly right because we know it.' Heedless Blurter heard of all this and considered that Hwang-ti knew how to express himself on the subject."

It is strange how, in the historic struggle for survival among human ideas, a philosophy as delicately original as that of Kwang should have fallen by the wayside. One cause of this, however, is doubtless inherent in the doctrine itself. It is not for all men, it is not for all moods, this fleeting phosphorescence of the great waters. To many modern minds the naïveté of the style, the queer twists of the humour, the smiling rigidity of the images, stiff and abrupt as figures on an archaic frieze, will be all that emanates from the writings of Kwang-tze. But to others, to a few here and there, it may well happen that out of these whispered oracles from the immense past, out of the Ailanthus groves of Mount Kwai-Khi, out of the gardens of Hwang-ti, out of the rivers of Khu-yuan, there will come a hint, a sign, a token, not altogether irrelevant, not altogether without a deep philosophic significance, even for these days, "so far retired from happy pieties"!

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Photograph: Druet

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A LONG WAY ROUND TO NIRVANA

or, Much Ado About Dying

BY G. SANTAYANA

THAT the end of life is death may be called a truism, since the various kinds of immortality that might perhaps supervene would none of them abolish death, but at best would weave life and death together into the texture of a more comprehensive destiny. The end of one life might be the beginning of another, if the Creator had composed his great work like a dramatic poet, assigning some lines to one character and some to another. Death would then be merely the cue at the end of each speech, summoning the next personage to break in and keep the ball rolling. Or perhaps, as some suppose, all the characters are assumed in turn by a single supernatural Spirit, who amid his endless improvisations is imagining himself living for the moment in this particular solar and social system. Death in such a universal monologue would be but a change of scene or of metre, while in the scramble of a real comedy it would be a change of actors. In either case every voice would be silenced sooner or later, and death would end each particular life, in spite of all possible sequels.

The relapse of created things into nothing is no violent fatality, but something naturally quite smooth and proper. This has been set forth recently, in a novel way, by a philosopher from whom we hardly expected such a lesson, namely Professor Sigmund Freud. He has now broadened his conception of sexual craving or *libido* into a general principle of attraction or concretion in matter, like the Eros of the ancient poets Hesiod and Empedocles. The windows of that stuffy clinic have been thrown open; that swell of acrid disinfectants, those hysterical shrieks, have escaped into the cold night. The troubles of the sick soul, we are given to understand, as well as their cure, after all flow from the stars.

I am glad that Freud has resisted the tendency to represent this principle of Love as the only principle in nature. Unity somehow exercises an evil spell over metaphysicians. It is admitted that in real life it is not well for One to be alone, and I think pure unity

is no less barren and graceless in metaphysics. You must have plurality to start with, or trinity, or at least duality, if you wish to get anywhere, even if you wish to get effectively into the bosom of the One, abandoning your separate existence. Freud, like Empedocles, has prudently introduced a prior principle for Love to play with; not Strife, however (which is only an incident in Love) but Inertia, or the tendency towards peace and death. Let us suppose that matter was originally dead, and perfectly content to be so, and that it still relapses, when it can, into its old equilibrium. But the homogeneous (as Spencer would say) when it is finite is unstable: and matter, presumably not being coextensive with space, necessarily forms aggregates which have an inside and an outside. The parts of such bodies are accordingly differently exposed to external influences and differently related to one another. This inequality, even in what seems most quiescent, is big with changes, destined to produce in time a wonderful complexity. It is the source of all uneasiness, of life, and of love.

"Let us imagine [writes Freud¹] an undifferentiated vesicle of sensitive substance: then its surface, exposed as it is to the outer world, is by its very position differentiated, and serves as an organ for receiving stimuli. Embryology, repeating as it does the history of evolution, does in fact show that the central nervous system arises from the ectoderm; the grey cortex of the brain remains a derivative of the primitive superficial layer. . . . This morsel of living substance floats about in an outer world which is charged with the most potent energies, and it would be destroyed . . . if it were not furnished with protection against stimulation. It acquires this through . . . a special integument or membrane. . . . The outer layer, by its own death, has secured all the deeper layers from a like fate. . . . It must suffice to take little samples of the outer world, to taste it, so to speak, in small quantities. In highly developed organisms the receptive external layer of what was once a vesicle has long been withdrawn into the depths of the body, but portions of it have been left on the surface immediately beneath the common protective barrier. These portions form the sense-organs. [On the other hand] the sensitive cortical

¹ The following quotations are drawn from *Beyond the Pleasure-Principle*, by Sigmund Freud; authorized translation by C. J. M. Hubback. The International Psycho-Analytic Press, 1922, pp. 29-48. The italics are in the original.

layer has no protective barrier against excitations emanating from within. . . . The most prolific sources of such excitations are the so-called instincts of the organism. . . . The child never gets tired of demanding the repetition of a game. . . . he wants always to hear the same story instead of a new one, insists inexorably on exact repetition, and corrects each deviation which the narrator lets slip by mistake. . . . According to this, *an instinct would be a tendency in living organic matter impelling it towards reinstatement of an earlier condition*, one which it had abandoned under the influence of external disturbing forces—a kind of organic elasticity or, to put it another way, the manifestation of inertia in organic life.

"If, then, all organic instincts are conservative, historically acquired, and directed towards regression, towards reinstatement of something earlier, we are obliged to place all the results of organic development to the credit of external, disturbing, and distracting influences. The rudimentary creature would from its very beginning not have wanted to change, would, if circumstances had remained the same, have always merely repeated the same course of existence. But in the last resort it must have been the evolution of our earth, and its relation to the sun, that has left its imprint on the development of organisms. The conservative organic instincts have absorbed every one of these enforced alterations in the course of life, and have stored them for repetition; they thus present the delusive appearance of forces striving after change and progress, while they are merely endeavouring to reach an old goal by ways both old and new. This final goal of all organic striving can be stated too. It would be counter to the conservative nature of instinct if the goal of life were a state never hitherto reached. It must be rather an ancient starting point, which the living being left long ago, and to which it harks back again by all the circuitous paths of development . . . *The goal of all life is death.* . . .

"Through a long period of time the living substance may have . . . had death within easy reach . . . until decisive external influences altered in such a way as to compel [it] to ever greater deviations from the original path of life, and to ever more complicated and circuitous routes to the attainment of the goal of death. These circuitous ways to death, faithfully retained by the conservative instincts, would be neither more nor less than the phenomena of life as we know it."

Freud puts forth these interesting suggestions with much modesty, admitting that they are vague and uncertain and (what it is even more important to notice) mythical in their terms; but it seems to me that, for all that, they are an admirable counterblast to prevalent follies. When we hear that there is, animating the whole universe, an *élan vital*, or general impulse toward some unknown but single ideal, the terms used are no less uncertain, mythical, and vague, but the suggestion conveyed is false, whereas that conveyed by Freud's speculations is true. In what sense can myths and metaphors be true or false? In the sense that, in terms drawn from moral predicaments or from literary psychology, they may report the general movement and the pertinent issue of material facts, and may inspire us with a wise sentiment in their presence. In this sense I should say that Greek mythology was true and Calvinist theology was false. The chief terms employed in psychoanalysis have always been metaphorical: "unconscious wishes," "the pleasure-principle," "the Oedipus complex," "Narcissism," "the censor"; nevertheless, interesting and profound vistas may be opened up, in such terms, into the tangle of events in a man's life, and a fresh start may be made with fewer encumbrances and less morbid inhibition. "The shortcomings of our description," Freud says, "would probably disappear if for psychological terms we could substitute physiological or chemical ones. These too only constitute a metaphorical language, but one familiar to us for a much longer time, and perhaps also simpler." All human discourse is metaphorical, in that our perceptions and thoughts are adventitious signs for their objects, as names are, and by no means copies of what is going on materially in the depths of nature; but just as the sportsman's eye, which yields but a summary graphic image, can trace the flight of a bird through the air quite well enough to shoot it and bring it down, so the myths of a wise philosopher about the origin of life or of dreams, though expressed symbolically, may reveal the pertinent movement of nature to us, and may kindle in us just sentiments and true expectations in respect to our fate—for his own soul is the bird this sportsman is shooting.

Now I think these new myths of Freud's about life, like his old ones about dreams, are calculated to enlighten and to chasten us enormously about ourselves. The human spirit, when it awakes, finds itself in trouble; it is burdened, for no reason it can assign, with all sorts of anxieties about food, pressures, pricks, noises, and

pains. It is born, as another wise myth has it, in original sin. And the passions and ambitions of life, as they come on, only complicate this burden and make it heavier, without rendering it less incessant or gratuitous. Whence this fatality, and whither does it lead? It comes from heredity, and it leads to propagation. When we ask how heredity could be started or transmitted, our ignorance of nature and of past time reduces us to silence or to wild conjectures. Something—let us call it matter—must always have existed, and some of its parts, under pressure of the others, must have got tied up into knots, like the mainspring of a watch, in such a violent and unhappy manner that when the pressure is relaxed they fly open as fast as they can, and unravel themselves with a vast sense of relief. Hence the longing to satisfy latent passions, with the fugitive pleasure in doing so. But the external agencies that originally wound up that mainspring never cease to operate; every fresh stimulus gives it another turn, until it snaps, or grows flaccid, or is unhinged. Moreover, from time to time, when circumstances change, these external agencies may encrust that primary organ with minor organs attached to it. Every impression, every adventure, leaves a trace or rather a seed behind it. It produces a further complication in the structure of the body, a fresh charge, which tends to repeat the impressed motion in season and out of season. Hence that perpetual docility or ductibility in living substance which enables it to learn tricks, to remember facts, and (when the seeds of past experiences marry and cross in the brain) to imagine new experiences, pleasing or horrible. Every act initiates a new habit and may implant a new instinct. We see people even late in life carried away by political or religious contagions or developing strange vices; there would be no peace in old age, but rather a greater and greater obsession by all sorts of cares, were it not that time, in exposing us to many adventitious influences, weakens or discharges our primitive passions; we are less greedy, less lusty, less hopeful, less generous. But these weakened primitive impulses are naturally by far the strongest and most deeply rooted in the organism: so that although an old man may be converted or may take up some hobby, there is usually something thin in his elderly zeal, compared with the heartiness of youth; nor is it edifying to see a soul in which the plainer human passions are extinct becoming a hot-bed of chance delusions.

In any case each fresh habit taking root in the organism forms

a little mainspring or instinct of its own, like a parasite; so that an elaborate mechanism is gradually developed, where each lever and spring holds the other down, and all hold the mainspring down together, allowing it to unwind itself only very gradually, and meantime keeping the whole clock ticking and revolving, and causing the smooth outer face which it turns to the world, so clean and innocent, to mark the time of day amiably for the passer-by. But there is a terribly complicated labour going on beneath, propelled with difficulty, and balanced precariously, with much secret friction and failure. No wonder that the engine often gets visibly out of order, or stops short: the marvel is that it ever manages to go at all. Nor is it satisfied with simply revolving and, when at last dismounted, starting afresh in the person of some seed it has dropped, a portion of its substance with all its concentrated instincts wound up tightly within it, and eager to repeat the ancestral experiment; all this growth is not merely material and vain. Each clock in revolving strikes the hour, even the quarters, and often with lovely chimes. These chimes we call perceptions, feelings, purposes, and dreams; and it is because we are taken up entirely with this pretty music, and perhaps think that it sounds of itself and needs no music-box to make it, that we find such difficulty in conceiving the nature of our own clocks and are compelled to describe them only musically, that is, in myths. But the ineptitude of our aesthetic minds to unravel the nature of mechanism does not deprive these minds of their own clearness and euphony. Besides sounding their various musical notes, they have the cognitive function of indicating the hour and catching the echoes of distant events or of maturing inward dispositions. This information and emotion, added to the incidental pleasures in satisfying our various passions, make up the life of an incarnate spirit. They reconcile it to the external fatality that has wound up the organism, and is breaking it down; and they rescue this organism and all its works from the indignity of being a vain complication and a waste of motion.

That the end of life should be death may sound sad: but what other end can anything have? The end of an evening party is to go to bed; but its use is to gather congenial people together, that they may pass the time pleasantly. An invitation to the dance is not rendered ironical because the dance cannot last for ever; the youngest of us and the most vigorously wound up, after a few hours, has had enough of sinuous stepping and prancing. The

transitoriness of things is essential to their physical being, and not at all sad in itself; it becomes sad by virtue of a sentimental illusion, which makes us imagine that they wish to endure, and that their end is always untimely; but in a healthy nature it is not so. What is truly sad is to have some impulse frustrated in the midst of its career, and robbed of its chosen object; and what is painful is to have an organ lacerated or destroyed when it is still vigorous, and not ready for its natural sleep and dissolution. We must not confuse the itch which our unsatisfied instincts continue to cause with the pleasure of satisfying and dismissing each of them in turn. Could they all be satisfied harmoniously we should be satisfied once for all and completely. Then doing and dying would coincide throughout and be a perfect pleasure.

This same insight is contained in another wise myth which has inspired morality and religion in India from time immemorial: I mean the doctrine of Karma. We are born, it says, with a heritage, a character imposed, and a long task assigned, all due to the ignorance which in our past lives has led us into all sorts of commitments. These obligations we must pay off, relieving the pure spirit within us from its accumulated burdens, from debts and assets both equally oppressive. We cannot disentangle ourselves by mere frivolity, nor by suicide: frivolity would only involve us more deeply in the toils of fate, and suicide would but truncate our misery and leave us for ever a confessed failure. When life is understood to be a process of redemption, its various phases are taken up in turn without haste and without undue attachment; their coming and going have all the keenness of pleasure, the holiness of sacrifice, and the beauty of art. The point is to have expressed and discharged all that was latent in us; and to this perfect relief various temperaments and various traditions assign different names, calling it having one's day, or doing one's duty, or realizing one's ideal, or saving one's soul. The task in any case is definite and imposed on us by nature, whether we recognize it or not; therefore we can make true moral progress or fall into real errors. Wisdom and genius lie in discerning this prescribed task and in doing it readily, cleanly, and without distraction. Folly on the contrary imagines that any scent is worth following, that we have an infinite nature, or no nature in particular, that life begins without obligations and can do business without capital, and that the will is free, instead of being a specific burden and a tight hereditary

knot to be unravelled. This romantic folly is defended by some philosophers without self-knowledge, who think that the variations and further entanglements which the future may bring are the manifestation of spirit; but they are, as Freud has indicated, imposed on living beings by external pressure, and take shape in the realm of matter. It is only after the organs of spirit are formed mechanically that spirit can exist, and can distinguish the better from the worse in the fate of those organs, and therefore in its own fate. Spirit has nothing to do with infinity. Infinity is something physical and ambiguous; there is no scale in it and no centre. The depths of the human heart are finite, and they are dark only to ignorance. Deep and dark as a soul may be when you look down into it from outside, it is something perfectly natural; and the same understanding that can unearth our suppressed young passions, and dispel our stubborn bad habits, can show us where our true good lies. Nature has marked out the path for us beforehand; there are snares in it, but also primroses, and it leads to peace.

RAIN: ST AUGUSTINE

BY ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

The rain is lisping at our blue umbrella,
Whispering against the silk.
The gardens smell of wet moss and ferns.
The little pools at our feet ruffle like pigeons in the breeze.
The streets are almost deserted. Everything is veiled,
And our fingers touch on the handle of the blue umbrella.

THE WERTHEIMER PORTRAITS

BY ROGER FRY

I WENT to see the Wertheimer portraits now on view at the National Gallery with some trepidation. I remembered so well seeing them as they appeared year by year on the walls of the Royal Academy. I remembered the chorus of praise with which my fellow-critics greeted them. I remembered some of the acid and disobliging phrases with which, in my youthful fanaticism, I had denounced them, and I wondered whether, when once they were enshrined in the National Gallery, I should be compelled in honesty to say that I had failed to recognize a great master in the dawn of his triumph or whether I should find myself once more a solitary Devil's Advocate. Either alternative seemed to me disagreeable. However, the sight of them relieved me of apprehension. I saw that I had been both right and wrong, and I saw that the dispute between my fellow-critics and myself arose from a misunderstanding of the meaning of the words we used. I felt then that what I had said was substantially true; that when I said that Mr Sargent was "our greatest practitioner in paint" I had very nearly hit the mark. But if I had been right from a purely aesthetic standpoint I had none the less been wrong in pedantically insisting on that in exhibitions of what ought to be regarded as an applied art. I had used "practitioner in paint" as a term of abuse, comparing it with the honourable title of artist. I had failed to see that just as there is need both for pure and applied science so there is need for both pure and applied art, and that the art of Mr Sargent is eminently and entirely of the latter kind. It is art applied to social requirements and social ambitions. I see now that this marvellous series of portraits represents a social transaction quite analogous to the transactions between a man and his lawyer. A rich man has need of a lawyer's professional skill to enable him to secure the transmission of his wealth to posterity, and a rich man, if he have the intelligence of Sir Asher Wertheimer and the luck to meet a Sargent, can, by the latter's professional skill, transmit his fame to posterity.

And as we must suppose that it is in the interests of society that

a rich man's wealth should be duly transmitted to his heirs, so we may admit that Sir Asher Wertheimer was likewise conferring a benefit on society, both now and in centuries to come, by transmitting his personality and his *entourage*. Viewing the whole matter, then, in this historical perspective and throwing over as irrelevant the purely aesthetic point of view, I can see and rejoice in Mr Sargent's astonishing professional skill.

We praise a great doctor though he has added nothing to the knowledge of truth, and we should praise a great applied artist though he has given us no new glimpse of beauty. Therefore, although Mr Sargent is already more fully represented than any living and almost any dead artist in our national collections, I for one welcome the bequest by which the National Gallery becomes the trustee of Sir Asher Wertheimer's fame.

I see that this record of the life of a successful business man of the close of the Nineteenth Century has a profound historical interest. It was a new thing in the history of civilization that such a man should venture to have himself and the members of his numerous family portrayed on the scale and with the circumstance of a royal or ducal family, and I see that Mr Sargent has quite peculiar and unique gifts for doing what both his patron and posterity required of him, and that such gifts are by no means common and deserve the fullest recognition.

For Mr Sargent was a brilliant ambassador between Sir Asher Wertheimer and posterity. He managed on the one hand to give these family portraits the sort of decorative splendour and *éclat* which puts them in line with the princely portraits of the past and which gave just satisfaction to his patron, and yet—and this is surely a supreme merit—he has never flattered him or his family. They are all seen with an almost coldly dispassionate and terribly observant eye. There they are on just the particular social eminence to which they had attained, and not altogether without traces of the meritorious effort of attainment. I used to imagine some trace of irony in Mr Sargent's work. I think I was wrong: he is too detached, too much without *parti pris* for that. But that detachment has enabled him to miss no fact that might have social significance, so that the record of his observations lends itself, if one chooses, to an ironical interpretation. It requires rare gifts indeed to make such a record—a keenness of eye, a skill of hand, and a

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transparent honesty of purpose that do not often occur to this degree. The record is indeed so well made that it will always be legible, and what is to be read therein will have an ever increasing historical interest.

To ask to have besides all this works of art is to be too exacting. Indeed, it is asking almost an impossibility. No man who was mainly an artist could have, so to speak, "delivered the goods." No artist could have treated one after another of all these members of the family with almost equal success, with such certainty of keeping to standard. His sensibility would have led him, here into some more penetrating and curious inquiry, there it would have been rebuffed altogether. From an artist, questions of composition and design would demand more anxious research. He could not have been satisfied as Mr Sargent was with a mere general adequacy of presentment. Questions of quality would have held him up, made him repeat passages again and again and, perhaps in the search for some more intimate expression, made him lose all that freshness and *élan* which never deserts so competent a performer as Mr Sargent.

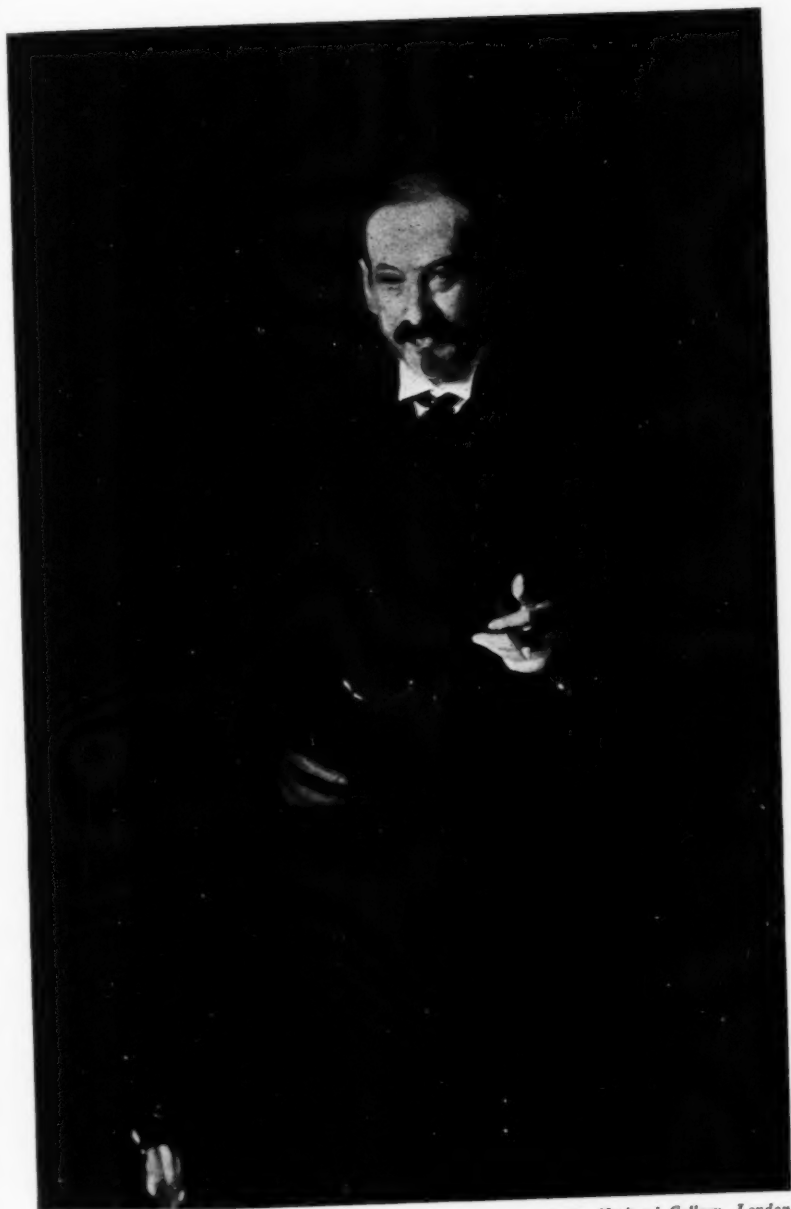
Mr Sargent has not the distinctively artistic vision—he has, one might say, no visual passion at all, scarcely any visual predilections—he has rather the undifferentiated eye of the ordinary man trained to its finest acuteness for observation, and supplied with the most perfectly obedient and skilful hand to do its bidding. But his values are never aesthetic values; they are the values of social and everyday life. Naturally, such a vision would never force a man to discover the means by which to record its experiences, and here comes in the connexion between applied and pure art. For, just as the man of applied science, having no particular passion for truth, applies the results, discovered by those who have, to some ulterior social end, so Mr Sargent has known how to use for his purposes the discoveries of pure art. And he was not only very skilful in seeing what could be of service, but very fortunate in what lay to his hand. For the dominant influence when he was a student in Paris was Manet. Now, Manet was very intensely an artist, an artist who had a passionate feeling about certain oppositions of tone and colour, and who felt these oppositions in such a way that he had to discover a very abrupt and frank way of stating them. He consequently invented a peculiarly straightforward and concise

technique. It was this technique which Mr Sargent had the quickness to see might be turned to quite other purposes, namely, to the rapid and incisive statement of the main facts of representation. For Manet certain relations of tone and colour had a definite aesthetic significance; for Mr Sargent they were merely means to effective representation.

From Manet, too, he picked up ready-made, as it were, certain colour harmonies—a chord of salmon pinks, oyster greys, and celadon greens to which he added, as a kind of universal medium, certain cool brown notes. This chord in all its varieties is adequate to his purposes, but he never shows in his statement the positive conviction of a passionate apprehension. It is part of the generally decorative effect of his presentment. Such, as I understand it, is the art of Mr Sargent, a felicitous application of means to an end quite different from that for which they were originally discovered.

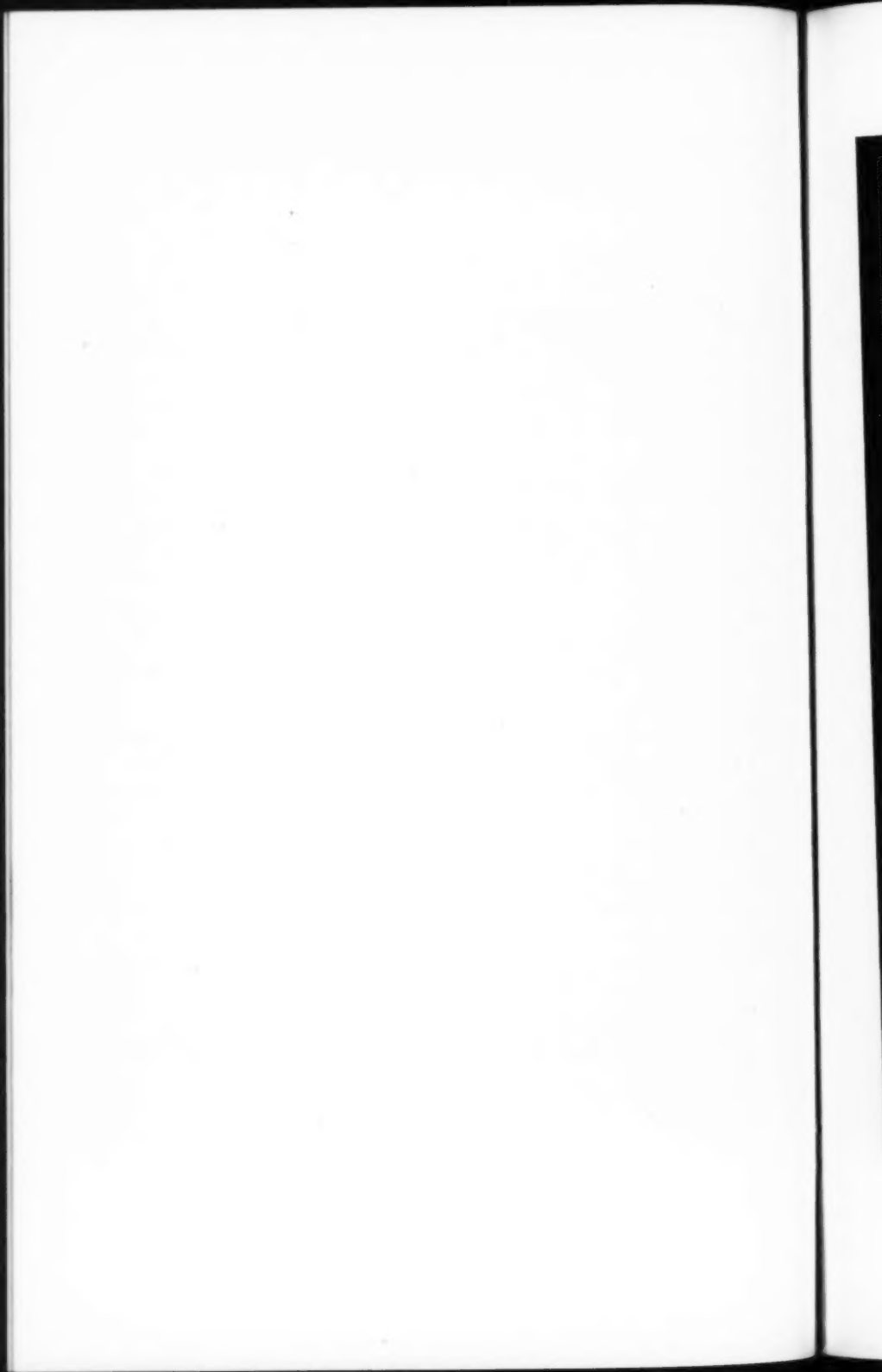
I see that one of my fellow critics says that Mr Sargent has ascended Parnassus so high that all can see him. I think he has got wrong in his topography. It is not Parnassus that Mr Sargent has climbed, but another mountain which frequently gets confused with it when viewed at a distance. This mountain has not yet been named. It is very high and has the advantage of never being lost in cloud as Parnassus frequently is. A number of very celebrated artists sit there, and Mr Sargent takes his place on it perhaps not a very long way below Frans Hals, Van Dyck, and Sir Thomas Lawrence.

If only this mountain could be properly named much confusion would be avoided. I for one should not have had that long misunderstanding with my fellow critics in the early years of this century. Moreover, it would save a painful feeling of injustice which rankles unnecessarily in the hearts of many artists. It ought to be as clearly understood in art as it is in science that those who profess the applied branches of these studies have a right to ten times the salary and far higher honours than those who are obsessed by the love of truth and beauty. The latter must also accept the fact that those who are as pre-eminent in applied art as Mr Sargent, may gain, besides present wealth and fame, almost as much posthumous glory as the true Parnassians.



Courtesy of the National Gallery, London

ASHER WERTHEIMER. BY JOHN S. SARGENT





Courtesy of the National Gallery, London
HYLDA WERTHEIMER. BY JOHN S. SARGENT



Courtesy of the National Gallery, London
ESSIE, RUBY, AND FERDINAND. CHILDREN OF ASHER WERTHEIMER. BY JOHN S. SARGENT

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MISS FLOTSAM AND MR JETSAM

BY ELISABETH SANXAY HOLDING

SHE had scarcely closed the door of her room when the electric lights went out. She was, however, prepared for this emergency, which was not rare; in fact she had caused it to happen once or twice herself while adjusting little devices for cooking and laundering. She groped her way to the bureau and lighted a candle always ready there, and instead of feeling annoyed, she was at heart innocently pleased by the diversion and by the flickering candle light. Then, just as she would hurry to the window at any unusual sound in the street, or would join any crowd, she went out into the passage, to lean over the balustrade. It was not curiosity that impelled her, but the terrible desire of her lonely and forgotten spirit to plunge into life. She wanted to see, to hear any one, anything.

Looking down the well of the staircase, she saw all the lodging house black and still. With a little sigh she turned back, and noticed that the door of the room next her own was open, showing in the dark interior the glowing end of a cigarette; she hesitated, struggling with one of those impulses which had given her so much trouble. Often as she had been rebuffed, hurt, derided, she could not stifle that violent longing to approach other human beings.

"No, I won't!" she said. "I won't . . ."

But it was too strong for her. Half reluctant, she approached the open door.

"Would you like a candle?" she asked.

A suave and weary voice replied, amiably.

"Thank you. But unless this is going to be more or less permanent, it doesn't matter."

"Well, you never know . . ." she said, mendaciously, for she did know well enough that a new fuse would promptly be installed. "I've got a lot of extra candles. . . ."

Decency compelled the man to say that he would like a candle, and she went off to fetch it. When she returned, he was standing in his doorway, a slender young fellow with a fastidious and melan-

choly air. He watched her coming; the light she carried lent to her face something long gone by daylight; she was lamentably thin and haggard; in a few years she would be grotesque, but youth still lingered with her now.

He took the candle from her with a word of thanks, but he could not turn away from her pitiable eagerness.

"I suppose this sort of thing's a serious inconvenience to some people," he observed.

"Well," she answered, with a nervous little giggle, "it is to me, I must say. I know I'm not supposed to, but just the same, I do cook my dinners in my room. And now I guess I'll have to wait."

"Too bad!" he said. And still he hadn't the heart to go, even to discourage her. "Poor little devil!" he thought. "Famished for talk." And aloud he said—"Won't you come in and sit down until the lights are on again?"

Her hollow cheeks grew scarlet.

"Well . . . I don't think I'd better . . ." she said. "I'd like to, only . . ."

He didn't press the point; if necessary he could stand in the doorway until the candle burnt out in his hand, anything rather than drive away this poor creature.

"It's queer, isn't it?" she said. "A big house, all full of people, and nobody ever talking to anybody else. . . . And if you do try to be friendly, why . . . they think you're after something."

"I suppose they do," he said, thoughtfully.

"There was a woman up on this floor last year," she went on. "She looked so kind of miserable that one night when I'd fixed up a nice little supper, I knocked at her door and asked her to come in and eat with me. But she was so disagreeable about it, you'd have thought I was offering her poison. And then a little later she turned on the gas. It didn't kill her. They took her off to the hospital, and I saw in the paper that she said she'd done it because she was so lonely. . . . That's why they haven't any gas now. I guess a lot of people are lonely, like that. . . . Only, if they'd be more friendly, and not so suspicious about people, they wouldn't need to be."

"Oh, you poor little devil!" he thought, so moved that he could not speak.

She misinterpreted his silence.

"Well, I'll be going, I guess—" she said, and her smile was intolerable.

"Please don't!" he said, hastily.

She looked at him, incredulous and delighted.

"I don't want to bother you—" she began, but he interrupted, vehemently.

"You're not. Not in the least. . . . Look here! If you can't cook your dinner, won't you come out somewhere with me? I'd appreciate it very much."

"Oh! I couldn't!" she cried.

He knew that she could and would, but that whatever pride she had left required some urging on his part, and he made a creditable attempt to do what she wished. Her perfunctory little denials went down, one after the other.

"All right, then, I will!" she said, resolutely. "It's nice of you to ask me, I must say."

"No; it's nice of you to come," he retorted. "It's very—friendly."

She went back into her room to get ready. That did not take her long, for she had lost interest in herself; she dressed her body as if it had been a doll which must be made neat and presentable for the street. But the magic of the candlelight still wrought its charm; looking at herself in the mirror she remembered how pretty she had been.

As she was adjusting her hat, the lights came on.

"Oh!" she cried, terribly grieved. "Now I can't go!" And she went out into the hall, to forestall his saying that she could very well cook her own meal now. But he was waiting for her, hat in hand, and she decided to say nothing.

"If he really wants me to come . . ." she thought. She could not quite believe that he did, but if he would pretend, so would she. And if he wished to pretend that he was not in all ways superior to her, but was her equal in misfortune, she would do that, too.

He asked her no questions, but nevertheless she told him lies. Sitting across the table from him in the chop house, she grew garrulous and she told him those things about herself which she had often dreamed were true. With now and then a fact; she was

really cashier in a dairy, as she said, and she really had come from Seattle.

"That's a long way," he remarked, smiling. "Aren't you ever homesick?"

Again her thin face grew scarlet. He wouldn't have asked that if he had known what her home or her life there had been.

"Well . . . it was lovely there," she said, and, so that he should not suspect, she invented still more wildly, an impossible past existence; she tried to make him see a delicately brought-up young girl leaving a home of marvellous luxury—

"Because I—I wanted to be independent," she said.

"Quite right!" said he, absently. Didn't she know that all her history was written plain on her haggard little face? Weren't there thousands like her, everywhere, no mystery to any man? Independent! Perhaps a ball in flight from one careless hand to another might feel independent for a little moment, in mid-air.

Later on, when she fancied she had made the favourable impression she intended to make, she grew more candid.

"I haven't got on so very well," she admitted. "I learned millinery back home, and I thought I'd do fine with that. But—" She paused. "I don't know," she said, with a sigh. "I seem to have just sort of drifted."

A bit of flotsam, he reflected, helplessly adrift on a swift and most merciless tide. Looking back, she could no longer see the ship from whence she had come; looking forward, not discern the shore toward which she was being carried; no use for her to struggle.

"If her life's flotsam," he thought, "mine is jetsam—something that's been deliberately thrown overboard. Anyhow we're in the same current, and bound for the same rocks in the end."

He pursued the fancy while she talked.

"I could swim back and climb on board the ship again, if I wanted. But I don't. I'd be one of the crew, helping to take her into God knows what port. Nobody'd care where I wanted to go. I'd rather float along alone."

It was a pain to watch her, for beneath her uneasily dainty manners, her nervous little laugh, her strained vivacity, he could perceive an immeasurable lassitude. She had given up; even her vanity was gone, her finger nails neglected, her hair uncurled. She was anxious enough to please—not as a woman, only as a comrade.

"It's either despair or repentance," he decided.

He wished with all his heart that she would go, for he had become weary beyond endurance. The quality of mercy is not strained, but pity is another and a more fragile thing. He was tired of the pity she aroused in him; he wanted to be rid of her and to forget her.

"I can't help her," he thought. "And I can't stand the sight of the poor little devil. I'm not capable of an impersonal interest in misery."

But as surely as if she clung round his neck she held him with her chatter. He saw clearly enough a monstrous claim being made upon him, extending into an indefinite future. And he had already paid so dear to be free of claims! In moody silence he brought her back to the door of her room and said "good-night," knowing well that he could not avoid her, that he would have to endure the most profound weariness and even unhappiness, not because of any faintest liking for her, but because he was by nature unable to hurt her.

The next evening she knocked at his door.

"I brought you a nice little bit of supper I just cooked," she whispered, glancing round like a conspirator. With profuse thanks he retired into the room, and locking the door, slid the stuff off the plate into a paper bag.

"This must end!" he thought, scowling. Nevertheless, he had not the courage to go out to dinner for hours, until he was nearly famished, and when he returned, the certainty that she was waiting and longing to speak to him was too much for him.

She opened her door instantly.

"Here's your plate," he said, "and thanks very much."

His air of polite finality was only too successful; the look in her eyes was terrible.

"Oh, that's all right!" she said, airily, and turned away to hide her tears.

"No!" he said, hastily. "I— Look here! Please!"

"Oh, that's all right!" she repeated, still more gaily, and he saw her shoulders twitch in a sob like a shudder. It was unendurable. He came a step or two nearer and lightly touched her arm.

"You know we're neighbours," he said, inanely.

She turned back then, with tears in her eyes, but smiling radiantly.

"I've got so silly," she explained. "I'm so afraid of being a nuisance. . . ."

He assured her that she wasn't that; he went on to say a good many things which he didn't mean, and in the end, he asked her to come out for a walk. She took up her hat at once and pinned it on without even a glance in the mirror; her eyes on his face, garrulous and happy again now.

As they descended through the silent house, her light voice seemed to flutter like a scrap of paper in the wind—a lost voice, that was never to alight in any heart.

It was a cold night and she was thinly dressed, but what did she care for that? She would have walked on for ever, anywhere, in any weather, so that he walked beside her. Without a word, she made him aware of that, and it hurt and angered him.

"This can't go on!" he thought. "It's the worst sort of folly. She's got to be made to see. . . ."

He began to talk a little at random.

"I shan't stop here long," he said. "I'm old enough to know that one place is very like another, and still I'm always looking for one that won't be."

"Oh! You're going away?" she asked, with a little gasp.

"Yes. There's nothing to keep me here," he answered.

They went on in silence for some time; now that he had made her see, he had a very uncomfortable consciousness that she was seeing very clearly in the dark at that moment.

"Well . . . of course . . . you've got such a lot ahead of you . . ." she said at last, in a trembling voice.

"Only what everyone else has," he answered, impatiently.

"You mean—dying?"

"Ending," he said.

"Maybe it isn't ending," she said, with an unconcealed sob. "I hope it isn't."

"Good Lord! Haven't you had enough?" he demanded.

"No, no! I just wish I could have another chance. . . ."

"But have you ever had a chance?"

"Yes, I did! Oh, I could have been different!" she cried. "You don't know . . . I could have been . . . Now, you see, I haven't anything. . . . Not anything. When I think how different I could have been! . . ."

Pitiable illusion!

"No, you couldn't have been," he said, suddenly gentle. "Don't think that. . . . And you're very sweet and dear as you are."

"I? I?" she asked, with a sort of terror.

He was now utterly defeated, committed to the endless assuagement of this hapless creature.

"Very well!" he said to himself, resigned and weary. "Apparently I haven't the moral courage to drown Miss Flotsam. And there's no point in half-drowning her. I shall have to be humane—to breaking point."

He suggested turning back, and his docile companion assented at once.

"But is there a breaking point?" he reflected. "I rather think there's not. Of all extraordinary things, the most extraordinary is the endurance of human beings. There's nothing imaginable we won't suffer without mutiny. Nothing! I'll take on the burden of this very tiresome Miss Flotsam, for no reason at all. I don't like her, certainly I don't admire her. I'm not even sure that I'm especially sorry for her. Simply, she makes a claim on my sympathy, and I'm obliged to acknowledge the claim. I can't help her; I've nothing to give. But I'll be the illusion she wants. I'll be the carrot in front of the donkey's nose. . . ."

His long silence frightened her; she waited, terribly anxious, for his next words. She sweet and dear? Oh, no!

"You didn't mean that, did you?" she asked, and her effort to sound careless and gay was a shocking failure.

"Yes!" he almost shouted. "Yes! I did!"

"Oh, but why?" she asked. "What makes you think that?"

To save his life, he could invent nothing plausible, and she kept on, desperate for reassurance, for a repetition of those words incredible and exquisite.

"I'd just like to know what you think is nice about me," she entreated.

"Nothing!" he thought, ready to laugh at the insufferable farce. And, in lieu of spoken words, laid a hand on her arm. To his consternation, both her hands clasped his, she was trembling and cold.

"I can be a friend . . ." she said. "I know—I know what it means to be lonely and—I'll be the best friend you ever had."

He was shaken with bitter mirth, grinning to himself in the dark,

moved by pity that transcended human limitations, that had grown monstrous. It was what one feels at the sight of a butterfly, still fluttering, but mangled beyond remedy; the overmastering impulse is to destroy it quickly, to end its anguish—and one's own. But this creature was human, and beyond such mercy.

They returned to the house, and on the landing he wished her good night. But she did not go.

"You're so—so quiet . . ." she said, faintly. "I'm afraid—I hope you haven't anything very bad to worry you? . . ."

He was so mortally weary of this that he could no longer respond.

"No, thanks, I haven't," he answered, stiff and unsmiling. "Good-night!"

He shut himself into his room with a sigh of relief. But through the thin wall he heard her stirring, and it exasperated him; he imagined that she moved feebly, like a stricken animal; he imagined her stumbling about because her eyes were blind with tears. He couldn't sleep, couldn't rest, with that going on; he walked up and down, angry, yet interested.

"Where's the line between cruelty and pity?" he thought. "I'm not sure that they aren't sometimes manifestations of the same emotion—the wish to get rid of what you don't like—"

He was interrupted by a knock at the door which he knew to be hers.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, half aloud. "*Can't* you let me alone?" And he flung open the door with a crash. The light from his room was full upon her, and he was appalled at her face. But she was without shame, utterly abandoned to her anguish, tears running down her cheeks in streams.

"I can't help it . . ." she stammered. "I—oh, I heard you walking up and down. . . . I was afraid—you—you were—like me. . . . All alone—and—and suffering so. . . ."

He said nothing at all; there was a shocking relief in being silent, in making no attempt at consolation. He looked at her with calm indifference.

"This must end," he reflected. "If I don't speak, she'll have to go away."

But apparently she didn't notice his silence; she came nearer and caught his passive hand in both of hers.

"I want you to know there's someone who's thinking of you," she said. "Someone who cares. . . . *Don't* feel lonely! *Don't!*"

"No, I won't," he assured her, a little dazed. "There's nothing wrong with me, I promise you. I'm not 'suffering.'"

"But I'm sorry for you! I am! I am!" she cried, with a great tearing sob like a hiccough. "You told me I—I was dear and sweet . . . Nobody else—for years and years . . . I want—to help you . . ."

"You do," he answered, looking with profound apprehension at all the other closed doors. "Please don't cry! You do help me—very much. I don't know what I'd do without you."

His insincerity seemed to him so patent and so brutal that he would not have felt surprised if she had struck him. All he wanted was to make her keep quiet at any cost. He was by no means so far gone in pessimism as to be indifferent to the possibility of other people observing or hearing this scene. The only thing he would not do was to let her set foot in his room; that was his last stronghold, his one refuge, and she should never, never pass that threshold. Otherwise, he was quite reckless; he would go to any lengths to tranquillize—and to get rid of her.

She had grasped his hand tighter, and on her disfigured and piteous face, still streaming tears, there was a strange light.

"Do I?" she asked. "Really? Does it comfort you to think—to think—there's someone near you?"

"It does," he said solemnly. "It's a blessing."

She dropped his hand, and stepped back, staring at him with dilated eyes. "You think that?" she said, so low he could scarcely hear her. "Then you don't know—about me."

"I don't care," he interposed hastily, in terror of a confession then and there. "I can see what you are—together gentle and good and kind."

"No, no!" she cried.

"Don't spoil everything!" he said, in a tone of sad entreaty. "Only say good-night to me now, and let me think—what I like."

She took a step forward and a step back, in an odd, mincing way, as if she were dancing. Then she rushed toward him and flung her arms about his neck, her wet cheek was against his, her fine, dry hair in his mouth and eyes.

"Good-night! Good-night, you dear boy! Oh, don't be sad! Just you remember—I'm here. . . ." Her quavering voice broke. "And thinking of you!" she ended in a gasp.

He stood like a stone, amazed, a little affronted. She drew back, but her trembling hand lingered on his head, and her anxious, troubled glance could not leave him.

"Will you try not to be sad?" she asked.

"I'm not sad," he answered, mildly.

"That's right!" she said, patting his head, and smiling weakly.

"That's right."

At last she went, and he was closing the door, when she came back, in great haste.

"I've got something that's wonderful for making you sleep!" she whispered.

But the door was closed, and he leaned against it, grimly resolute.

"No, thanks!" he said.

Then he forgot her; not that he consciously repudiated thinking of her, but because this thing was so incredible and nebulous that it eluded him. If she wasn't before his eyes, she didn't, she couldn't exist.

He waked the next morning with more energy than he had had for a long time. He made up his mind to escape Miss Flotsam, to give up his room at once, and to be gone when she returned that evening.

"Without a word," he decided. "That's the kindest way. Then she can invent any sort of romance she likes to account for it. Poor little devil!"

But he was not to be let off so easily. Under his door was a note. In an infantile rage he put his foot on it.

"I won't read it!" he said.

Impossible! He had to read it, just as he was obliged to listen to all that she said. He picked up the envelope with a mental apology for the boot mark that sullied it, and, with a sigh, tore it open.

Like every appeal she made, it was too long. The words that might have touched him were repeated until they could only exasperate; she was not content with a simple explanation of her tormented life; she had felt obliged to lie a little, to ornament, and

to cheapen every detail. A sickening letter, as if she were groveling at his feet. . . . He had known at the first glance that she had suffered; that was enough to know of any human creature.

"You can't think what it means to me to write this letter. I know it may be the end of everything. But I couldn't let you go on thinking I was different and better than I really am. You said I was gentle and good and kind. You said it was a blessing to have me near you. But if I deceived you, and you found out, it would be a curse. I know what it is to be deceived in people. I wouldn't do that to you. I want you to know all about me.

"I think you know how hard life is for some people, and may be you can still go on being friends with me. I'm not trying to excuse any of the wrong things I have done, but some of it was not my fault. I am not going to work to-day. I shall stay in my room and wait to see how you feel about it. If you don't come by noon, I shall know that you feel you can't be friends any more. I won't blame you. I *promise* you I won't blame you, not one bit. Only, if you can't, I don't think I can go on any longer. I won't mind not going on."

She had signed this "Elaine," and after the signature there was a postscript:

"Please believe that I won't mind not going on. I am pretty much discouraged anyhow and I know a very easy way."

His hand was raised to knock at her door when he stopped.

"But what am I to say?" he thought, in a panic. "What am I to do? Friends! It's not quite that with her, poor little devil. What can I do but go on hurting her for a little while longer? I couldn't keep it up. She'd know . . ."

He turned back into his own room and walked up and down, in anguish, in intolerable longing to be free.

"I couldn't keep it up. . . . If I don't go to her, she'll think that I loved her and that her letter overwhelmed me. . . . She'll think it's a tragedy. . . . O God! Isn't it better to make it a tragedy, instead of playing out the farce? Go and tell her the letter doesn't make any difference and I'm still her friend?

Then if she puts her arms around me—if she touches me again, I'll hate her. And she'll see. . . . I can't do it."

Then a thought came to him of such exquisite relief that he sank into a chair, suddenly grown weak.

"She doesn't mean it. . . . I'll put the letter under the door again, where she'll see it from the hall. She's sure to come out after me. And I won't answer; then she'll think I never got it."

So he replaced the letter and sat down to wait.

What was she doing in there? Not a sound came through the thin partition. What was she doing? What could she do? Think? Her thoughts would be unendurable; he fancied that they were drifting in through the wall in little invisible clouds, acrid, bitter with tears, of no form or substance.

But if he went to her now, and set this right for a day, a month, there would be the rest of her life to be passed in there, thinking.

"No! She'll come," he thought. "She'll take her letter away again, and nothing will happen. She'll simply go on. And I'll go on . . . the natural course of events."

The phrase was soothing until he analysed it and recalled instances of the natural course of events in certain cases he had observed. He was ready to believe that a humane man might well occupy his life in deflecting the natural course of events.

The clock in the Metropolitan tower struck eleven. What was she doing?

"She's dropped asleep. . . . Or she's forgotten. She's capable of forgetting anything, losing anything in that incredibly muddled brain of hers. And last night she was—distinctly *exaltée*. . . . Very much so!"

For a moment he was able to see something amusing in this thing.

"It's a compliment," he observed, with a faint grin. "A lady to threaten to die for me. That's something, after all."

Then he remembered her face. He sprang up, overturning the chair and the crash it made seemed a new affront to her august and terrible silence. He wanted to hurry to her and apologize. Apologize for pity?

"If I make a row, she'll come out," he thought. "She'll want to know whether I'm 'sad.'"

He moved about noisily, angrily, for a time, but she did not come.

"It's a cheap, silly trick . . ." he muttered. "Nothing more. She thought that would fetch me, that old, old tale about 'ending it all.' It won't though. It's despicable."

On the fitful wind came the sound of the chimes ringing the half hour, faint at first, and ending in a clear ringing note as a strong gust blew. It chilled him. He stood still in the centre of the room, everything so quiet, his watch and his heart racing together, like nature and civilization in a laughable competition. And then behind the wall came a little sound, something indistinct, a rustle or a tiny sigh.

"This must be ended!" he said, aloud, and took a step toward the door. There at his feet was the letter. "'Friends' . . . 'Go on being friends!'" To go on—to go on—to keep the fluttering tormented thing alive a little longer, only to meet the same end. He could not keep it up; very soon she would see. . . . A farce, or a tragedy?

He flung himself into a chair and covered his face with his hands—a mechanical and self-conscious gesture, done only out of regard for the situation. He was not able even to think of her now; he was lost in contemplation of a procession of doleful images, all the brothers and sisters of Miss Flotsam, from the beginning of time, all floating helpless in the current, their perishing faces turned without hope, without reproach, toward those others who did not drift, who were aboard their ship and bound for an unimaginable port.

The clock struck twelve. It was the most tremendous clamour he had ever heard, it rang in his own body with violent vibrations. After the actual sound had died away, the waves still beat on his ears with the brutal excitement of a tocsin. The terror, the ecstasy, it must be for her! But for her it would end, and for him it would go on ringing. . . .

He got up when he could, when the deafening and sublime clangour had grown fainter in his heart. He went out and knocked upon her door. He waited, and knocked again, but there was no answer.

He tore up the letter and left the house, not to return, without advising any one of what had happened under that roof. Miss Flotsam was washed up on the beach now, out of reach of the sea; let her lie there in peace.

SIX MOVEMENTS

(For Mrs Edward MacDowell)

BY ALFRED KREYMBORG

NEIGHBOURS

Birds aren't people one has to walk to:
Stay where you are, they'll come to you, talk too.

What's in gadding in search of a neighbour?
Far too much distance, much too much labour.

Chat about trifles, argue a season:
Surely you'll find no roots to grow trees on?

The dark, steep, long way back—is it longer?
Wits any wiser, legs any stronger?

Sit them right here in this very place, swayed
By idleness eyeing a fiery parade

Of robins, swallows, thrushes, sparrows,
Coming like lightning, going like arrows.

HERMIT THRUSH

It's hard to count what an air can do:
It cannot buy one a shirt or shoe:

It cannot bind a neat nest; find things
For leaving the earth on floating wings:

Nothing of twigs in it, nothing of roots;
But something of rivers, a little of flutes

That I've heard rippling a bodiless tune
That caught me up in a small balloon,

And took me high without writing a check;

And let me down without breaking my neck:
No effort at all: I was absent-minded:
Don't even know now what the air or the wind did.

ROBIN

He takes a lot of staccato steps, stops—
Like a busy toe-dancer with dizzy tops
That never cease spinning, twinkling a minute
Until they come to the end of what's in it.
He runs on a line like a tight-rope walker—
Tries not to look scared—nor to answer a talker.
He might be as deaf as a man who surveys
Two spots with a string for the high wire ways.
No matter how fast he may go or stop dead—
He holds his head still—an oblivious head;
But just down below, they twist and they squirm—
Like a terrified crowd or an angle worm.

CITY CHAP

Who's that dusty stranger?—What's he doing here?—
That city-bred bird with the ill-bred leer?—
Perching on branches like telegraph wires?—
Chirping his slang above passionate fires?—
Poking his head about, twitching his tail?—
Getting drunk in our pools as though they were ale?—
Never accepting, but stealing our rations?—
Acting toward us as he would to relations?—
Who asked him hither, what led him this way?—
With his critical carping, his mockery, eh?—
And worse than all these, he's a jerky reminder
Of winters, towns, and of people no kinder.

SWALLOWS

They're not going travelling for many a day:
They don't attempt branches, they seek it in clay:

First they start holes, and then dig in hollows:
Excavate caverns to lay future swallows:

A gray, crumbling chapel, best for the landing:
Too old for man—not too old to be standing:

A home no one visits, come west or come east,
Unless he be harmless, some hermit or priest,

Who walks in a plot shaded green, an arena
Between pater noster and ave maria.

If he should lift eyes and see birds, the chance is:
He'll be but a lover: another St Francis.

SONG SPARROW

He stutters and stammers—a catch in his throat—
Chromatics falter—too many notes float—

Beginnings too eager—scales all uncertain—
Come to a cadence, too careful the curtain.

The thing that he studies—flattering, fluttering—
Might be called song could the fellow but sing

From the start of a phrase to the end of a sentence,
And not be pursued and be caught by repentance.

Who would consider such doings professional?—
The little he does, does it sound processional?—

And still, he persists and resists till he find
A channel for opening the way to his mind.

REMINISCENCES OF LEONID ANDREYEV

BY K. CHUKOVSKY

Translated from the Russian by Lawrence Hyde

HE loved enormousness. In an enormous room, on an enormous writing-table, there stood an enormous inkstand. But there was no ink in it. It would have been useless to dip the enormous pen in it. It was quite dry—"I haven't written anything now for three months," said Leonid Andreyev—"besides The Helmsman I read nothing whatever. . . ."

The Helmsman—a paper for sailors. The last number of it lies on the side of the desk; the cover has a picture of a yacht.

Andreyev paces up and down his enormous room and talks about the sea, top-sails, anchors, sails. To-day he is a sailor, a sea wolf. Even his gait has become nautical. Instead of cigarettes he smokes a pipe. He has shaved off his moustache; his throat is bare like a sailor's. His face is sunburnt. On a nail there hangs a pair of nautical binoculars.

You attempt to talk about something else. He listens only out of politeness.

To-morrow we are going aboard Savva, and meanwhile . . .

Savva is his motor yacht. He talks about "averages," submerged rocks, and sand-banks.

Night. Four o'clock. You sit on the sofa and listen, and he walks about and talks in a monologue.

He always talks in a monologue. His language is rhythmical and flowing.

Sometimes he stops, pours himself out a cup of strong, black, cold tea, drinks it at a gulp, as if it were a glass of vodka, feverishly swallows a few caramels—and again begins to talk, talk. . . . He talks about God, death, of how all sailors believe in God, of how, surrounded by abysses, they are aware of the proximity of death all their lives: how through contemplating the stars every night they become poets and sages. If they could express what they feel when they stand beneath the enormous stars some-

where in the Indian Ocean they would eclipse Shakespeare and Kant. . . .

But at last he becomes tired. The monologue is broken by long pauses. His walk becomes listless. It is half past five. He drinks another two glasses, takes a candle, and goes off to his room:

"To-morrow morning we will go aboard Savva."

Your bed is in the next room in the tower. You lie down, but you cannot get to sleep. You think: how tired he must be! To-night in his room he has walked a distance of *not less than twelve miles*, and his conversation, if it were written down, would make a good sized book. What a senseless waste of energy!

In the morning in the long-boat Khamoidol we make for the sea. And where has Andreyev got that leather Norwegian fisherman's cap from? I have only seen them before in pictures, in the paper Round the World. And high, waterproof boots, exactly like a cinema pirate. Give him a harpoon in his hand and he would be one of Jack London's magnificent whalers.

Here is the yacht. And here is the gardener Stepanitch, transmogrified into a boatswain. We range about the Gulf of Finland until late in the evening and I never cease being delighted with this inspired actor, who has now played such a new and difficult part—without a public; only for himself—for twenty-four hours. How he stuffs his pipe, how he spits, how he glances at his toy compass! He feels himself to be the captain of some ocean-going vessel. His powerful legs planted widely apart, he gazes with silence and concentration into the distance; his commands ring out sharply. . . . He pays no attention to the passengers; as if the captain of an ocean-going vessel would indulge in conversation with his passengers! . . .

In this playing there was much delightful childish simplicity. Only very talented people—only poets—are able to be children to the same extent. It is easy to imagine Pushkin's Mozart, playing at horses with delight: Salière reveals his absence of talent just by his incapacity for such play. When a child makes a railway out of chairs one has to be depressingly unimaginative to be able to tell it that the chairs are not really coaches. And the chief charm of Andreyev lay in the fact that whatever game he happened to be playing—and he was always playing some game or other—he believed in it firmly and gave himself to it without reserve.

When you came to see him again after a few months, you discovered that he was a painter.

His hair was long and undulating, his beard the short one of the aesthete. He wore a black velvet jacket. His room was turned into a studio. He is as fertile as Rubens; the brush never leaves his hand the whole day. You pass from one room to another and he shows you his golden, yellow-green, pictures. Here is a scene from *The Life of Man*. Here is a portrait of Ivan Byelusov. Here again a large Byzantine ikon, representing Judas Iscariot and Christ with naïve blasphemy. They appear to be twins and each has an ordinary nimbus around his head.

The whole night he tramps up and down his enormous room and talks about Velasquez, Dürer, Vrubel. You sit on the sofa and listen. Suddenly he half closes his eyes, steps back, regards you with a painter's eye, then calls his wife, and says:

"Anya, look, what chiaroscuro!"

You attempt to talk about something else. He listens only out of politeness. To-morrow is varnishing day at the Academy of Arts, yesterday he was visited by Ryepin, the day after to-morrow he is going to Gallen. You feel inclined to ask, "*What about the yacht?*"—but the members of the family sign to you, "*Don't ask.*" Having become interested in something, Andreyev can talk about nothing else; all his previous enthusiasms become repulsive to him. . . . He does not like to be reminded of them.

When he plays at being an artist he forgets his previous part as a sailor; in general, he never returns to his past rôles, however brilliantly they may have been played. . . .

And now colour photography.

It seems that not one man, but a gigantic factory, working in shifts, has produced these numberless heaps of large and small photographs, which have been piled up in his room stored in special boxes and chests, which hang in the windows and are stacked up on chairs. There is no corner of his villa which he has not taken several times. With some he has been extraordinarily successful; for instance, spring landscapes. It is difficult to believe that they are photographs, so full are they of elegiac music.

In the course of a month he has taken thousands of photographs—as if executing some colossal order—and when you went to see him he compelled you to examine them all, naïvely convinced that

for you they were a source of nothing less than bliss. He could not imagine that there existed people for whom these pieces of glass were uninteresting. He touchingly begs everyone to buy a coloured photograph.

That night, walking up and down his immense room, he indulges in a monologue on the great Lumière, the discoverer of colour photography, and on sulphuric acid and potash. You sit and listen.

Every one of his passions turns at times into a mania, devouring him completely.

A whole period of his life was enriched by a love of gramophones—not love, but insane passion. He became ill, as it were, with gramophones, and several months were needed for his recovery.

Whatever trifle he grew interested in he distended to enormous proportions. I remember once in Kuokallo he became absorbed in playing *gorodki*.

"We can't play any more," said his exhausted companions, "it's dark, you can't see anything!"

"Light lanterns," he cried, "we'll play by lantern light."

"But we shall break them."

"What does it matter?"

At the first go he hit a lantern and smashed it to atoms, but he only cried:

"Light another at once!"

This lack of sense for limits was his outstanding characteristic. He was attracted to everything that was gigantic.

The mantelpiece in his room was as large as a door, and the room itself like a square. His house in the village of Bammelsu towered above all the surrounding ones: every beam weighed about three hundredweight: the foundation was of cyclopean blocks.

I remember his showing me, not long before the war, the plan of some grandiose edifice. "What sort of house is that?" I asked. "It is not a house, it's a table," answered Leonid Andreyev. It appeared that he had given the architect a design for a storied table: the ordinary writing-desk was too small for him and constrained him.

A similar attraction to the enormous, magnificent, and pompous was apparent in him at every step. The hyperbolic style of his books reflected the hyperbolic style of his life. There was some

justice in Ryepin's title for him—Lorenzo. He should have lived in a gilded castle, and have trodden on luxurious carpets, attended by a splendid suite. This would have suited him: he was born for the part. With what stateliness he awaited his guests at the top of the wide, festal staircase leading from his room to the dining-room! If some music had suddenly struck up, one would not have felt surprised.

He wrote his letters on expensive paper in a broad, masterful hand, as if they were manifestos and not letters, and in what an elevated, triumphant, richly decorated style, in which every phrase was adorned with a garland of magnificent periods!

His house was always full of people: guests, relations, a large staff of servants, and children—crowds of children, his own and others'—his temperament demanded a broad and full life.

There are people who seem to have been created for oppression and poverty: it is difficult to conceive Dostoevsky as degenerate. To do so would be unnaturally perverse. Similarly, Leonid Andreyev was meant to be a magnate: every one of his movements suggested the grandee. His beautiful, chiselled, decorative face; his graceful, slightly stout figure; his dignified, light, step all fitted in with the part of a magnificent duke which he later played so superbly. This was his greatest rôle and he organically grew into it. He was one of those talented, ambitious, pompous people, who thirst to be the captain on every ship, the archbishop in every cathedral. He would not consent to play second fiddle in anything; even at *gorodki* he wished to be the first and only one. He was born to march at the head of some splendid procession, by the light of torches and to the sound of bells.

His enormous fireplace consumed incredible quantities of wood, but the room remained in such icy cold that it was terrible to go into it.

The great stone blocks bore so heavily on the three hundred-weight beams that the ceiling collapsed and it was impossible to eat in the dining-room.

The huge hydraulic pump, used for bringing water from the Black River, went wrong in the first month apparently, and remained like a rusty skeleton, as if rejoicing in its uselessness, until it was sold for scrap iron.

Winter life in a Finnish village is mean, uncomfortable, and dead. Snow and stillness—even the wolves do not howl. A Finnish village is not for dukes.

Anyway this magnificent life seemed at times theatrical. Behind the coulisses there seemed to be hiding something else.

"You think that's granite?" said a drunken writer to me once, standing in front of the façade of Andreyev's house. "It's not granite, but cardboard. Blow on it and it will tumble down."

But however hard the writer blew, it did not collapse; yet there was truth in his drunken words; in actuality there was something theatrical and decorative in everything that surrounded or reflected Andreyev. The whole interior of his house had this character, and the house itself—in the Norwegian style, with a tower—looked like the creation of a talented scenic artist. Andreyev's costumes suited him as they suit an operatic tenor—costumes of a sportsman, artist, sailor.

He wore them as costumes are worn on the stage.

I don't know why, but every time I left him I experienced a feeling, not of exaltation, but of depression. It seemed to me that someone had offended him. Why was he struggling in the Gulf of Finland when he was great enough to wade through the ocean? How could such an exceptional soul be wasted on gramophones? Yesterday he spent the whole night talking about war; for eight hours he paced up and down the room declaiming a wonderful monologue on Zeppelins, landings, bloody Austrian fields. Why doesn't he go there himself? Why does he stick in the desert, seeing nothing, knowing nothing, and unburdening himself only to a passing friend? If he could only use the energy which he spends in his nightly pacing up and down his room—or even half of it—for other purposes, he would be a remarkable traveller; he would wander round the whole world, eclipsing Livingstone and Stanley. His brain thirsted for uninterrupted work—it was a ceaseless mill which ever needed more and more corn. But there was hardly any corn to be had—no living impressions—and the great millstones continued with demoniacal energy to grind not corn, but dust.

And where was he to get corn from? He lived in Finland as in a desert. You travelled to distant countries, flew in aeroplanes, took part in battles, and returned to find with astonishment that Andreyev was still walking up and down his room, and continuing

the monologue of nearly a year ago. And his enormous room this evening appeared suddenly very small—and his talk lonely. Was it not sad that an artist with such attentive, sharp, and eager eyes should see nothing besides snow, should sit within four walls and listen to the howling of the wind? At the time when his beloved Kipling, London, and Wells were wandering over four continents he was living in a wilderness, without any external material for creation. One was amazed at the power of the poetic streams in him, which even in this desert had not run dry.

Leonid Andreyev gave himself up to writing with the same recklessness as to everything else—until his strength was utterly exhausted. Often he wrote nothing for months at a time and then suddenly he would produce with incredible speed in the course of a few nights an enormous tragedy or story. He would walk up and down the room, declaim aloud, and drink black tea; his typewriter would clatter as if possessed, yet still be hardly able to keep pace with him. His periods were subordinated to the musical rhythm which was carrying him along like a wave. Without this almost poetical rhythm he could not write even a letter.

He did not simply write his works; he was devoured by them as by a fire. He became for the time being a maniac and was aware of nothing but the particular piece of writing he had in hand; however small it was he extended it to grandiose dimensions, loaded it with gigantic images, for in his artistic creation as in his life he went to extremes; it was not for nothing that his favourite words in his books were "huge," "extraordinary," "monstrous." Every theme he touched became colossal, much larger than he himself, and shut him off from everything else in the universe.

And it was a remarkable fact: when he was creating his *Leizer*, the Jew from the play *Anathema*, he even in his private conversation, over tea, fell into a biblical style of speech. He himself had become for a time a Jew. But when he was writing *Sachka Zhegulev* his voice took on the bold tones of a Volga boatman. He involuntarily echoed the voices and gestures of his characters, the quality of their souls, entering into them like an actor. I remember, one evening, how he astonished me by his reckless gaiety. It appeared that he had just drawn the character of *Tsyganek*, the audacious character from *The Seven That Were Hanged*. In creating *Tsyganek* he turned into him himself, and out of inertia re-

mained Tsyganek until the morning—the same words, intonations, gestures.

He became Count Lorenzo when he was writing his *Black Masks*; a sailor when he was writing *The Ocean*.

It is for this reason that opinions about him differed so much. Some said that he was a boaster, others that he was a wild, ungovernable spirit. One person visiting him found him in the part of Savva, another would encounter a student from *The Days of Our Life*, another the pirate Khorre. And each one thought that this was Andreyev. They forgot that they were confronted with an artist who contained within himself hundreds of parts and who sincerely and with complete conviction thought that each part was a real individual.

There were very many Andreyevs and all of them were genuine.

Many of these Andreyevs I disliked, but the one which was a Moscow student I was very fond of. He would suddenly become childishly mischievous and playful, scatter round him *jeux d'esprit*, frequently poor, but homely and affectionate in tone, and string together nonsensical verses. Once, in a malicious moment, wishing to make fun of the Moscow writer T——, who was extraordinarily polite, he rang him up at dawn on the telephone.

"Who's speaking?" asks the polite writer, half asleep.

"Boborykin," answers Andreyev.

"Is that you, Peter Dmitrievitch?"

"Yes," says Andreyev, in Boborykin's senile voice.

"How can I oblige you?" asks the polite writer.

"I've a favour to ask of you; the fact is that this Sunday I'm going to be married . . . and I hope that you will do me the honour of being my best man."

"Delighted," exclaims the polite writer, not daring, out of good manners, to express any surprise at the marriage of an old man of eighty, already, incidentally, possessed of one wife.

Others of his jokes were more happy. Thus he christened his country villa *Villa Advance*, as it was erected with funds loaned to him by a publisher.

But often his good spirits were—as with everything concerning Andreyev—excessive and had the character of an attack: they made one uncomfortable and one was glad when they were over.

¹ A well-known Russian writer.

After them he always became sombre and more often than not would begin one of his monologues on death. It was his favourite theme. He pronounced the word *death* in a special manner—with feeling and emphasis, as some voluptuaries pronounce the word *woman*. In this respect Andreyev possessed a great talent—he knew how to fear death as no one else could. To fear death is no easy matter: many attempt it, but without success. Andreyev succeeded magnificently: here was his real calling—to experience a deathly and terrible horror. This horror is to be discerned in all his books, and I think that his grasping at colour photography, gramophones, painting, constituted attempts to save himself from it. Somehow he had to protect himself from these sickening attacks of despair. In the terrible years after the revolution, when an epidemic of suicide was raging in Russia, Andreyev involuntarily became the leader and apostle of these abandoners of life. They felt him to be one of themselves. I remember his showing me a whole collection of letters addressed to him by suicides before their death. It had evidently become a custom before doing away with oneself to send a letter to Leonid Andreyev.

Sometimes it appeared strange. Sometimes, watching him as he strolled about the yard, among his stables and outhouses, followed by his magnificent hound, Tyucha, or posed, dressed in a velvet coat, in front of some visiting photographer, one could not believe that this man could be carrying within him a tragic consciousness of eternity, non-existence, chaos, worldly desolation. But the spirit bloweth where it listeth, and the whole of Andreyev's life was soaked in this feeling of worldly desolation. It was this feeling which gave to his work a special philosophical colouring, since it is impossible to spend one's whole life meditating on such desolation and not to become in the end a metaphysician. The same thing gave a key also to his personality as a writer: in his books he always handled—well or badly—eternal, metaphysical, and transcendental questions. Other themes failed to move him. The group of writers among which he found himself at the beginning of his literary career; Gorki, Chirikov, Skitalets, Kuprin—was in reality strange to him. They were describers of life, excited by the problems of life, but not by existence itself; and he was the only one among them who was exercised by the eternal and tragic. He was tragic in his very essence and all his ecstatic, affected, theatrical talent, leading

as it did to pompousness in style and to traditional and exaggerated forms, was admirably adapted to metaphysically tragic subjects.

What is one to say about the chief thing of all—his creation? We know very little about it. He almost always worked at night: I cannot recall a single one of his works which was written by day. Having written and printed anything, he became extraordinarily indifferent about it and, as if sick of it, thought no more of the matter. He was only really carried away by what was as yet unwritten. While he was writing any story or piece he could talk about nothing else: it appeared to him that it would be his best, greatest, unsurpassed work. He jealously compared it with all his previous efforts: he was annoyed if you liked anything which he had written ten years before. He was never able to modify anything: his taste was much smaller than his talent. His writings, by their very nature, were extempore. When he was possessed by a theme every tiny circumstance became connected with it. I remember how once, having arrived at Kuokallo at night, he hired a droshky and paid the driver a rouble. The Finn was offended and said laconically:

"I don't want a rouble."

Andreyev added another half rouble and in a few days in *The Seven Who Were Hanged* appeared the dim-eyed Janson, obstinately repeating to the judges:

"I don't want to be hanged . . . I don't want to be hanged."

The insignificant episode with the driver had become the central effect in a theatrically pathetic story. This capacity for giving an unexpected artistic value to what was apparently trifling and superficial was always one of Andreyev's strong points.

One day he came across in *The Odessa News* the remark of the famous aviator Utochkin in describing his flight:

"At sunset our prison is extraordinarily beautiful."

This affection for "our prison" pleased Andreyev very much and in a few days he had written his well-known story, *My Diary*, about a man who had grown to love his prison. It concluded with the very same words:

"At sunset our prison is extraordinarily beautiful."

But he gave to the words an unexpectedly grandiose, metaphysical, sense.



A WOODCUT. BY D. GALANIS



A WOODCUT. BY D. GALANIS





A WOODCUT. BY D. GALANIS

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PARIS LETTER

September, 1923

ONCE more the curtain falls and liberty is rendered to the spectators; at least to those who live by the profane clock, who are "strongly attached to the world," as the Jansenists said, instead of imposing the rhythm of their own life on their environment. In other words the Paris season has ended.

Days without vacation, when the pleasures of vanity (a luxury tax) succeed to the artificial duties of gossip and the fork; when the social instincts—appetites or antipathies—dovetail perfectly like a piece of joiner's work, are followed now, after tumultuous departures, by those hours of liberty and work which are the best of the year. You are alone, as if in a museum; everyone has abandoned you. At last you can work, or even stroll and listen to your own heart; "full of a thousand essential causes of ennui," wrote Pascal, whom we have been forced to re-read in all the newspapers. To glorify his centenary they decided to reveal this young and gifted writer to a public always greedy for the unknown. With that indiscretion, smiling menace, which is one of the ornaments of the after-war, they glorified not only Pascal, but his enemies and his love affairs. And, unintentionally, with the help of certain buried ladies, they brought us closer to portions of his work which had remained obscure. They threw light with a modern violence on several phrases of the *Pensées*, admirable for the profane experiences which they resumed; maybe it was Proust who prepared us to understand them. Gracious and irritated phantoms have been brought to life: for example that lovely demoiselle de Roannez whom Pascal loved, in spite of her being the victim "of idleness, of the love of adornment, and of her attachment to companies which she herself had recognized as being dangerous for her." And the mother-superior of Port Royal who wrote these lines has added, "She cannot resist the furious instinct which drives her to cut her hair." If this *garçonne* were living to-day, I am sure she would be weighing, like the others, on our consciences. To such a degree is it true that certain subjects are always held at the disposition of the public, in all good bookstores.

At the moment when I strive to recall the events of the last two months, I review my own life in a brief instant like somebody drowning, and I am frightened to see that nothing remains but tiring and inanimate pleasures. July is the period of examinations and August that of examining one's conscience. I shall fail in the second test as I was failed in the first.

Among other great endurance contests we had the bicycle tour of France on the one hand and on the other d'Annunzio's *Phedre* and *The Martyrdom of St Sebastian*, as played by Ida Rubinstein. The lyric tragedy of antiquity attained its last acceptable phase, I believe, in the musical form of the eighteenth century, with Gluck and others; all efforts to renew it, with the exception of Hebbel's, have been useless and cruel.

I pass over in silence the antiquaries' fair which transformed the palace of Versailles into a flea-market (even the fleas were out of buying reach on account of the exchange); the *Bal de l'Opéra*, where Chinese styles appeared to those who still only suspected the fact as being definitely outdated; the *Bal des Quat z' Arts*, a resurrection of Pompeii, where the items which are hidden from profane eyes in the Museum of Naples were presented freely to the Boston ladies who inhabit the hotels of the rue de Rivoli (these were invaded at the dinner hour by slaves and freedmen, while drunken helots, painted with minium, exacted vestimentary sacrifices from Mlle Sorel to which she did not consent); a few concerts where Paderewski, the great romantic magnetizer, poured forth on the piano the same fluid which he uses to communicate with the gods and his constituents.

Out of all these ephemeral ornaments, already oxydized, there remain two authentic jewels of the sort we shall continue to enjoy and wear. One of them is the new opera-ballet of Albert Roussel—*Padmavâti*—one of the best works of this charming composer, a subject drawn from his study of the thirteenth century, where the author does not always escape his Russian influences, but where he writes with an amplitude and a perfection of technique superior to those of the *Festin de l'Araignée*, the piece which made him famous. He was not satisfied with writing only songs; he placed soloists and choirs in the orchestra. It was an attempt analogous to that which Strawinsky seems to have made for other reasons in *Noces*. Written in 1917—after *Le Sacre*, that is, and before

Mavra—this ballet marks one of the most important moments in the career of the great Russian musician: a career which without ceasing to be unified has been extremely rich in articulations. In Noces one finds the same purity of inspiration, the same pursuit of a simple theme, the same contempt for every picturesque quality that was already marked in the revolution of *Le Sacre du Printemps*. The ballet is the simple history of a country betrothal, commented by mixed choruses, where simple percussions on the strings, the woodwinds, the gongs, the brasses are enough to render the most poignant emotion. "Briefly the principle is that of jazz," Darius Milhaud told me, "but without ever sacrificing the melody"; more an oratorio than a ballet. We are looking forward with impatience to the pleasure of hearing it in a concert room, or rather of hearing it again, for the rehearsal of the piece at the home of the Princess Edmond de Polignac revealed it to us with a perfection which has not been equalled since. However, the stylized choreography of Nijinska, against the sober monochrome of the settings by Goncharova, was never harmful and often was a help.

I thought, as I left the Theatre de la Gaîté, that contrary to the other arts, where the confusion of the last thirty years has persisted, the ages of modern music seem to be as clearly separated already as the reigns of separate kings. We should be thankful. *Tristan*, *Pelléas*, *Le Sacre du Printemps*: are these not three accessions to a throne (these three legendary forms of a same symbol, the abdication of the human will before the fatality of fecundation, before the *libido*)?

Pierre Loti is dead. We have lost a great writer, but the whole of his work had already been given us before the war, by a sort of advance bequest, and the death of its author was not so much a tragedy as a natural phenomenon. The only event to be mourned with tears of blood is the death of an artist who still has something to say. Along with Loti exoticism disappears from our literature. Exoticism is a sort of coloured photography which is no longer suited to our age. It is no more than a surprise-effect, absolutely opposed to the new cosmopolitanism, the aim of which is not to describe distant lands at random, by a selfish caprice and to the exclusion or even at the expense of one's own country, but rather (and here is its dignity and its use) to attempt to establish a closer

union, a more honourable union than the old and immoral alliances commanded by *intérêt d'État*, between one's own country and the others. If, in literature, we still make use of a background, it is only to distract the reader, and profiting by his lack of attention to impose modern truths upon him. Already a better educated public knows enough to take the information it is given with a little grain of salt. One of the achievements of realism was the fact that the reader could believe everything, for everything was exact, even if nothing were true. The public to-day is better schooled; it is infinitely more supple, more intelligent; it progresses from one hour to the next. Among so many reasons to despair, we have this one real comfort; I insist upon it. One can be inexact without being called a practical joker. To take an example from the so-called exotic literature (this second-class voyage within the reach of every pocketbook) consider in what utilitarian spirit an ordinary reader followed Loti thirty years ago into a description of the Pacific. And put a reader of the present day before one of those foreign landscapes raised to the second power (as in the case of Larbaud) where everything is so impregnated with the atmosphere of another nation that it is not even necessary to describe; set him before one of these conscious "frauds" that are Giraudoux's Pacific, Mac-Orlan's Germany, or the Russia of Delteil, and ask him if he does not experience a rarer pleasure and, under these extravagant appearances, if he does not find a lesson that is much more profound, more profitable? The realism of yesterday was only an infidelity. The free invention of to-day is neither an imposture nor a contradiction; it is art which truly, usefully, has attained its liberty.

The last dove to be released from our literary ark is the Prix du Nouveau Monde, founded to bind the intellectual union between France and America: a prize due to the generosity of Mrs Keep. I was member of the jury. Our prize had the fortunes of a trap-pigeon; it was fired at; this bird which we released fell like a boomerang upon our proper noses. I can speak about it more freely because—so it is said—I did not vote for the laureate, Radiguet. And however his book, *Le Diable au Corps*, is an important document, a revelation of the war spirit of a boy, and it is the first testimony of a generation which, if I am not mistaken, will play us all sorts of tricks. There is no reason to become indignant; one can only

establish a fact and remain free, in case one wishes to remedy affairs, to go back to the beginning. Under an apparent innocence which will deceive only grown-ups, Radiguet seems cold, master of himself, astonishingly precocious (perhaps he is normal and we naïve, slow to develop?) disabused, mistrustful, rational, and a hedonist. Our reactions toward him are those of the father who, in *Le Diable au Corps*, seems angry and supine. Associations of French veterans have written to the American Legion to warn your public against this immoral work; all the protests will change nothing; *Le Diable au Corps* is an "unpleasant" book, but one which deserves to be read. The faults I find with it are exterior faults, the attempt to manufacture a masterpiece by following these receipts: a transparent plot, a serene style, a composition without errors. It is a fashion and I mention it because it is spreading to a whole group of young writers, under the influence of Gide, although Gide himself is not directly responsible. The end of art is indeed serenity and economy of means, but only after the sacrifice. To reconstruct masterpieces synthetically is a mistake. Time acts on a book to make it seem perfect, but these writers offer to take the place of time. The haste is unseemly which delivers us masterpieces a hundred years too soon. They make us think of a general who says to his enemies, "Retreat, you can see that I have won the battle." The enemy might answer, "Not at all. The battle is still to be fought, and to begin it we make you our prisoner." A writer's first duty is to live his books or at least his style; on this subject Emerson has made excellent observations.

I was thinking of this yesterday as I watched, during the course of a party—a "Montmartre rag," which Darius Milhaud and I were giving to end the season, before our friends dispersed, laden with pencils and fountain pens and paper and white canvases, toward countryside and inspiration—as I watched the young generation, monocled, implacable, which stood in the doorways without offering to dance, and which was not amused. I said also, to comfort myself, making a rapid inventory, that we had a fine lot of fresh and powerful talents: painters like Picasso, Braque, Segonzac, L. A. Moreau, Favory, Dufy, Pascin, La Fresnaye, Lhote, Leger; women who paint deliciously—Marie Laurencin, Hélène Perdriat, Marval, Irène Lagut; sculptors like Lipschitz, Archipenko, Brancusi; young writers like Cendrars, Cocteau, Giraudoux, Larbaud,

Jaloux, Salmon, MacOrlan, Lacretelle, Drieu la Rochelle, Aragon; musicians like Strawinsky, Milhaud, Honneger, Auric, Poulenc: clear spirits in a troubled age, rich with its spoils, knowing perfectly where to give rein, dominators, seductive, conquerors already, forming an *ensemble* of which we can well be proud, and which, at the present moment, can be found nowhere else. Let me be pardoned for this testimony of my satisfaction which I give, if not to my own friends, at least to Paris, this infinitely rich background for the displaying of new values.

A certain number of publications, some of them literary, have been agitated for meritorious reasons over the publication of a book by M Félicien Champsaur, entitled *Ouha Roi des Singes*, in which are delineated the amours of an American young lady with an inhabitant of the trees of Borneo. With all the resources of the Darwinian theory one could hardly develop ancestor worship and the Oedipus complex to this extreme. M F. Champsaur, who is a writer of no value, is worthy of a relative immortality only for the ingenious idea which he had in one of his early books, entitled *L'Orgie Latine* (we spent our first pocket-money to buy it) of printing the most scabrous passages in red, so as to save hurried readers the trouble of reading the rest. It was recently demanded in the Chamber of Deputies that *Ouha* be suppressed. However, in our legislation there is no text (except those providing for the case of the obscene publications whose suppression is regulated by international conventions, which is a different story) to permit that measures be taken against a writer—admitting that M F. Champsaur has any right to this title. It is the privilege of the American government to prohibit the importation of his book, and such action could only be advantageous. Let us keep to our own ground: no condemnation is as damning to a book as literary condemnation; it is without appeal. Where a book by Joyce is acquitted, *Ouha*, after the first page, is sentenced to death.

As sign of the times I noticed this commentary, from the department of sales promotion, on the jacket of a French novel which has just been published: "A distinguished novel—a new study of Love as viewed by other methods than those of Freud—7 francs."

One of the coolest spots in Paris at this season when, pitiless as reason, the sun cuts the city and makes the river tremble, is the Victor Hugo Museum, a romantic annotation on the margin of the classical poem which is the Place des Vosges. My friend Raymond Escholier, who, as well as being a good novelist, is its conservator, offers us another pleasure at this moment: an exposition of Daumier and Gavarni. (I must admit that during the hour I passed there I saw only Americans.) Between two windows, under glass, I stopped to examine the palette of Daumier, the one with which he painted for the last time, covered with a thick crust of red clay, of dried blood, of the dark tones of an ardent soil, colour of tannin. What emotion! He could have painted with anything; he had no need to charm; he had need to prove; he had no need to amuse, this man who during his lifetime was never considered except as a caricaturist; he had to conduct the rudest and most complete inquest which has been left us on an era. He did not escape the terrible lot of almost all French painters of the nineteenth century, that long martyrology, but the glory which he knows to-day consoles us, in spite of Forain.

And now I am going to leave Paris for Athens. In the sea which is catching fire I can see a white ship gliding already. It flies the American flag. "I am taking you on board," my amiable hostess told me, "but on condition that you do not tell me the Acropolis is ugly." I shall not tell her; if it is true, I shall write it.

PAUL MORAND

BOOK REVIEWS

ULYSSES, ORDER, AND MYTH

ULYSSES. By James Joyce. 8vo. 752 pages. Shakespeare and Company, Paris. Limited edition.

MR JOYCE'S book has been out long enough for no more general expression of praise, or expostulation with its detractors, to be necessary; and it has not been out long enough for any attempt at a complete measurement of its place and significance to be possible. All that one can usefully do at this time, and it is a great deal to do, for such a book, is to elucidate any aspect of the book—and the number of aspects is indefinite—which has not yet been fixed. I hold this book to be the most important expression which the present age has found; it is a book to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape. These are postulates for anything that I have to say about it, and I have no wish to waste the reader's time by elaborating my eulogies; it has given me all the surprise, delight, and terror that I can require, and I will leave it at that.

Amongst all the criticisms I have seen of the book, I have seen nothing—unless we except, in its way, M Valéry Larbaud's valuable paper which is rather an Introduction than a criticism—which seemed to me to appreciate the significance of the method employed—the parallel to the Odyssey, and the use of appropriate styles and symbols to each division. Yet one might expect this to be the first peculiarity to attract attention; but it has been treated as an amusing dodge, or scaffolding erected by the author for the purpose of disposing his realistic tale, of no interest in the completed structure. The criticism which Mr Aldington directed upon *Ulysses* several years ago seems to me to fail by this oversight—but, as Mr Aldington wrote before the complete work had appeared, fails more honourably than the attempts of those who had the whole book before them. Mr Aldington treated Mr Joyce as a prophet of chaos; and wailed at the flood of Dadaism which his prescient eye

saw bursting forth at the tap of the magician's rod. Of course, the influence which Mr Joyce's book may have is from my point of view an irrelevance. A very great book may have a very bad influence indeed; and a mediocre book may be in the event most salutary. The next generation is responsible for its own soul; a man of genius is responsible to his peers, not to a studio-full of uneducated and undisciplined coxcombs. Still, Mr Aldington's pathetic solicitude for the half-witted seems to me to carry certain implications about the nature of the book itself to which I cannot assent; and this is the important issue. He finds the book, if I understand him, to be an invitation to chaos, and an expression of feelings which are perverse, partial, and a distortion of reality. But unless I quote Mr Aldington's words I am likely to falsify. "I say, moreover," he says,¹ "that when Mr Joyce, with his marvellous gifts, uses them to disgust us with mankind, he is doing something which is false and a libel on humanity." It is somewhat similar to the opinion of the urbane Thackeray upon Swift. "As for the moral, I think it horrible, shameful, unmanly, blasphemous: and giant and great as this Dean is, I say we should hoot him." (This, of the conclusion of the Voyage to the Houyhnhnms—which seems to me one of the greatest triumphs that the human soul has ever achieved.—It is true that Thackeray later pays Swift one of the finest tributes that a man has ever given or received: "So great a man he seems to me that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling." And Mr Aldington, in his time, is almost equally generous.)

Whether it is possible to libel humanity (in distinction to libel in the usual sense, which is libelling an individual or a group in contrast with the rest of humanity) is a question for philosophical societies to discuss; but of course if Ulysses were a "libel" it would simply be a forged document, a powerless fraud, which would never have extracted from Mr Aldington a moment's attention. I do not wish to linger over this point: the interesting question is that begged by Mr Aldington when he refers to Mr Joyce's "great *undisciplined* talent."

I think that Mr Aldington and I are more or less agreed as to what we want in principle, and agreed to call it classicism. It is because of this agreement that I have chosen Mr Aldington to at-

¹ English Review, April 1921.

tack on the present issue. We are agreed as to what we want, but not as to how to get it, or as to what contemporary writing exhibits a tendency in that direction. We agree, I hope, that "classicism" is not an alternative to "romanticism," as of political parties, Conservative and Liberal, Republican and Democrat, on a "turn-the-rascals-out" platform. It is a goal toward which all good literature strives, so far as it is good, according to the possibilities of its place and time. One can be "classical," in a sense, by turning away from nine-tenths of the material which lies at hand, and selecting only mummified stuff from a museum—like some contemporary writers, about whom one could say some nasty things in this connexion, if it were worth while (Mr Aldington is not one of them). Or one can be classical in tendency by doing the best one can with the material at hand. The confusion springs from the fact that the term is applied to literature and to the whole complex of interests and modes of behaviour and society of which literature is a part; and it has not the same bearing in both applications. It is much easier to be a classicist in literary criticism than in creative art—because in criticism you are responsible only for what you want, and in creation you are responsible for what you can do with material which you must simply accept. And in this material I include the emotions and feelings of the writer himself, which, for that writer, are simply material which he must accept—not virtues to be enlarged or vices to be diminished. The question, then, about Mr Joyce, is: how much living material does he deal with, and how does he deal with it: deal with, not as a legislator or exhorter, but as an artist?

It is here that Mr Joyce's parallel use of the *Odyssey* has a great importance. It has the importance of a scientific discovery. No one else has built a novel upon such a foundation before: it has never before been necessary. I am not begging the question in calling *Ulysses* a "novel"; and if you call it an epic it will not matter. If it is not a novel, that is simply because the novel is a form which will no longer serve; it is because the novel, instead of being a form, was simply the expression of an age which had not sufficiently lost all form to feel the need of something stricter. Mr Joyce has written one novel—the *Portrait*; Mr Wyndham Lewis has written one novel—*Tarr*. I do not suppose that either of them will ever write another "novel." The novel ended with

Flaubert and with James. It is, I think, because Mr Joyce and Mr Lewis, being "in advance" of their time, felt a conscious or probably unconscious dissatisfaction with the form, that their novels are more formless than those of a dozen clever writers who are unaware of its obsolescence.

In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. They will not be imitators, any more than the scientist who uses the discoveries of an Einstein in pursuing his own, independent, further investigations. It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. It is a method already adumbrated by Mr Yeats, and of the need for which I believe Mr Yeats to have been the first contemporary to be conscious. It is a method for which the horoscope is auspicious. Psychology (such as it is, and whether our reaction to it be comic or serious) ethnology, and *The Golden Bough* have concurred to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago. Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is, I seriously believe, a step toward making the modern world possible for art, toward that order and form which Mr Aldington so earnestly desires. And only those who have won their own discipline in secret and without aid, in a world which offers very little assistance to that end, can be of any use in furthering this advance.

T. S. ELIOT

ARTIST OR NUN

THE DOVE'S NEST. By Katherine Mansfield. 12mo.
250 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

ONE wonders if Mr Middleton Murry is wholly aware of the injury he is doing his wife's reputation by treating as sacred every chance scrap of paper on which she recorded her most denuded and transient moods. Like a somnambulant acolyte with bowed head and reverential step he bears the chalice of her fame unconscious that in replenishing it with ever thinner and thinner dilutions he is imperilling the clear wine with which he began his pilgrimage. Certainly, in Miss Mansfield's earlier books, *Bliss* and *The Garden Party*, one could delight in so original and potential a talent, while reserving judgement as to certain suggested limitations. Like a cutter racing lightly over tossing waves her style carried her mobile perceptions and if one waited somewhat anxiously for the craft to turn full-blown for port one remained at least in doubt as to just what port it was to be, after all, headed toward. Now with the poems and excerpts from her journal appearing in consecutive numbers of *The Adelphi*, together with the introductory notes to *The Dove's Nest*, one sees Katherine Mansfield either as a supplicating girl plundered pitifully of her dignity, her grief mounting in distorted curves of rationalization, or as one reduced by sheer thinness of inspiration into startling lapses of literary taste. Both she and Mr Murry seem to discuss the art of writing as if it were only to be attained through some mysterious purification of one's inner being. "She purged the last vestige of rebellion from herself . . . she was preparing to write stories of a new kind with the whole truth in them," he records in an article telling of her death. Or, she herself cries out, "I haven't felt pure in heart, not humble, not good . . . Lord make me crystal pure for thy light to shine through." Is this, one asks oneself, an unhappy novitiate for some strange religious order? For surely such rapt supplications in the interests of "goodness" and "purity" are more in keeping with the attitude of a nun than with the free and fearless pursuit of an artist who follows ever more attentively the dan-

gerous implications of his own developing experience. Again, "I look at the mountains, I try to pray—and I think of something clever." But if anything more had been needed to deliver her into our hands we have but to listen to Mr Murry as he chants his pathetic and monotonous litany. In the September issue of *The Adelphi* with complete solemnity he quotes as a final solution of that mysterious secret which has baffled so many great minds—namely, "the essential of style"—Miss Mansfield's "simple and striking metaphor"—"to speak to the back of the room." One wonders just how Walter Pater would have received such a relaxed and domesticated formula.

Nowhere in *The Dove's Nest* do we find that "complex of fine measurements" commended by Henry James which distinguished *Prelude*, a story where each character gives out vibrantly yet driftingly without attenuation or discord its own separate note. Here are, indeed, many instances of her caressing insight, her own singular lightness of approach. Just as a child might imprison for a moment in the cup of its hand a fledgeling fallen by the wayside and then suddenly abandon it on some grassy plot, Miss Mansfield seems to clasp in the circle of her thought a passing protest over the crudeness of life, a sense of the fugitive unacknowledged differences that lurk between the sexes, a sympathetic understanding of adolescence, and then depositing her tremulous and explicit burden hurriedly on the ground, with a toss of the head, is off down the road whistling a bar from *Bohème*.

Perhaps the most interesting of the stories in this latest volume, although like most of the others, unfinished, is that entitled *A Married Man's Story*. Here, as in a much discussed earlier story, *Je ne Parle pas Français*, one detects in the composition a tranced tension combined with an underlying confusion of purpose, as though the mood that nurtured it, though fertile, though imaginative, had in the end served but to make glide stealthily through the pages Miss Mansfield's own lambent or perplexed observations. For Raoul Duquette, the little Frenchman in the former story, is neither mad enough, shallow enough, nor deep enough to be convincing, and the authentic ring in his suddenly enunciated misery, which his facile articulacy negates, announces itself unmistakably as a vicarious release for the author's own private anguish, just as in *A Married Man's Story* she voices again her own insistent prob-

lem when she makes the husband say "Tell me! Tell me! Why is it so difficult to write simply—and not only simply but *sotto voce*, if you know what I mean? That is how I long to write. No fine effects—no bravura . . ."

The most accomplished of these stories is *The Fly*. Here we see Miss Mansfield at her best, her percipient eye undiverted gazing through without prejudice to the secret sources of action of "the boss" and exposing them with a few brilliant objective strokes. There is here no suggestion of that exiguous world, a world somehow softened and diminished, though so dazzlingly extended, which many of her stories reveal; none of those clever strokes which she herself deplored, but which her artistic prescience was not robust enough to circumvent; none of those chance banal similes about "ultimate porters" and "ultimate trains" which one could not be altogether sure received her own condonation until one finds them corroborated in the following manner—"Perhaps it is the way God opens houses at dead of night when he is taking a quiet turn with an angel," or "They refused to realize that conversation is like a dear little baby that is brought in to be handed round."

To know Katherine Mansfield at her best one must really, then, return to her earlier stories, to *Prelude*, to *At the Bay*, to *Bliss*, so subtle in possibilities that one wonders if she herself caught at more than the floating straw of her own intuition, to *The Stranger*, and to *Escape*. Whether her work will live beyond our own generation or not is difficult to foretell, but it is perhaps not too much to say that, in those exceptional instances where her own sensitive psychology corresponded most exactly with that of the character she portrayed, she could hardly have failed to please even that great master of intricate thought whose four requisites of good literature remained, "intensity, lucidity, brevity and beauty."

ALYSE GREGORY

LIFE AS AN ART

THE DANCE OF LIFE. By *Havelock Ellis*. 8vo. 248 pages. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$3.

MORALISTS, in the main, have been a somewhat forbidding race. Their main preoccupation has usually been to try to prevent people from doing what they wanted to do, on the ground—formerly explicit, but now seldom avowed—that the natural man is wicked. Psychoanalysed, such moralists would be found to be moved principally by envy: being themselves too old or too sour or too stiff for the pleasures of life, they feel a discomfort, when they see others enjoying themselves, which appears in consciousness as moral reprobation. Accordingly the things they condemn are not things which cause pain, but things which cause pleasure, and in order to be able to condemn such things they put fantastic interpretations on religious precepts. The commandment not to work on Saturdays is interpreted as a commandment not to play on Sundays. This particular rule of morality is dying out, but many that are still insisted upon have equally little foundation in reason.

Mr Havelock Ellis is a moralist, but not of the usual sort. He is best known as the author of a monumental work of research, which the authorities, in their wisdom, have seen fit to make unobtainable for ordinary men and women, on the ground that no one would be virtuous except through ignorance, and that therefore the spread of knowledge must be illegal. It is true that a host of wise men, from Socrates onwards, have taught that wrong conduct always springs from ignorance, but that has never been the view of the police, who have always believed that people must be either ignorant or wicked, without telling us which of the two they considered themselves to be.

Those who know nothing else of Mr Havelock Ellis might expect to find in him the temperament of a rebel, with possibly some bitterness against "folly, doctor-like, controlling skill." But although his views on most subjects are unorthodox, he is far too urbane to be properly described as a rebel. He surveys the world calmly and genially; he does not try to scold men out of their evil

ways, but to win them to the life that he considers good by the portrayal of its delights. The holders of power, reinforced by their sycophants among parsons and professors, view the lines of others as consisting essentially of work, with only such intervals of rest as are physiologically necessary. Mr Havelock Ellis views life as essentially play, interrupted by the need of a certain minimum of work to secure the necessities of existence. He begins with a chapter on the art of dancing, and goes on to maintain that all life ought to be as like a dance as possible. This is not suggested in Bacchic spirit, as a way of drowning our sorrows; the mood is not that of:

"Is it not fine to dance and sing
While the bells of death do ring?"

The tragic facts of human life seem to have lost their sting for him, and to have been somehow harmonized as they are in tragic drama. This is explained by his very interesting account of his conversion to mysticism at the age of nineteen—a conversion which was permanent in spite (or because) of its almost complete freedom from dogma.

"My whole attitude towards the universe was changed. It was no longer an attitude of hostility and dread, but of confidence and love. My self was one with the Not-self, my will one with the universal will. I seemed to walk in light; my feet scarcely touched the ground; I had entered a new world."

This mystic illumination underlies the views set forth on thought, on religion, and on morals, all of which spring from the elimination of Satan. There are many people—the present reviewer is among them—who find it harder to give up Satan than any other item of orthodox religion. Mr Havelock Ellis has given him up, and has abandoned along with him all the sterner side of morals and religion and thought. He does not believe, with Jeremiah, that "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Consequently morality is not to be restrictive, but expansive: it is to be more like the training of an athlete, designed to cultivate a natural excellence. It is not, however, to be a matter of obedience to a set of rules, but must at every moment depend on feeling.

"No reasonable moral being may draw breath in the world without an open-eyed freedom of choice; and if the moral world is to be governed by laws, better to people it with automatic machines than with living men and women. In our human world the precision of mechanism is for ever impossible."

This is one of the points where the author's optimism becomes apparent, and where the Devil's Advocate sees his chance. "Automatic machines" are what men and women are becoming; "the precision of mechanism" is what the industrial system is forcing them to acquire. The present reviewer, as a devout believer in Satan, holds that in our age he is incarnate in the captain of industry, whether trust magnate or communist commissar. But to say to the ordinary person: "Remain a living man or woman; do not become an automatic machine," is equivalent to saying: "Die of hunger, and do not attempt to earn your living." Advice of this sort is apt to be coldly received. Moreover the state of an automaton, once achieved, is pleasant; a life which is entirely habitual involves a minimum of friction and responsibility. The Bolsheviks and the Fabians, quite rightly, insist that love of spontaneity is anarchic and aristocratic. All true democrats in the present day mean by "democracy" the reduction of the few to the level of the many, not the raising of the many to the level of the few; consequently they welcome increasing mechanization, and wish it to become universal. The power of Satan, therefore, is just as great as in past times.

To speak without diabolic metaphors, the question is whether life is to be conceived as a game or a fight. In the former case, we may agree with all that Mr Havelock Ellis says; in the latter case, we shall import something of traditional morals into our outlook. Let us agree at once that life ought to be a game, that there is nothing intrinsically desirable about fighting, and that the disappearance of the sterner virtues, if it were permanently possible, would be an unmitigated boon. But if—to take an analogy—the game of football were illegal, it could only be played by organizing a subsidiary team to take on the police, and this team would have to be much larger than the teams that were playing. In this case, the preservation of football would require a high order of self-sacrifice in those who faced prison to protect players. It happens that football is not illegal, but many occupations quite as innocent and quite as productive of a balance of pleasure are illegal. Bishops and other

busy-bodies employ an army of detectives to spy upon couples in the Parks, for fear they should not suffer from lack of housing accommodation so much as is hoped. Female teachers, in most parts of England, are required to be unmarried, which means that they must be childless and either celibate or very skilfully deceptive. It would be no more cruel to insist that they should be blinded or have their hands cut off. Uncivilized races are compelled to work in mines or other industrial enterprises, and are drilled to spread terror and starvation among the weaker nations of Europe. In China, an ancient civilization which has almost all the characteristics that Mr Havelock Ellis admires is being deliberately destroyed by the military and financial ambitions of nations with stronger armies and navies, to the accompaniment of cant about integrity and independence and the Open Door.

In such a world, all who are not a menace to their neighbours are bound to be exterminated by war or economic pressure. Art is almost extinct; science still flourishes because it ministers to homicide, but must perish when it has perfected its work by destruction. How is one to say, in such a world, "my will is one with the universal will"? Mr Havelock Ellis professes that his mysticism is free from dogma; but if he supposes that we have anything to do with a universal will other than that of organized mankind, he has adopted all that is essential in the dogma of theism. The only "universal will" visible to me is that of human groups, which are all bent upon mutual destruction. With this universal will I am emphatically not at one. Agreeing with Mr Havelock Ellis as to the ends of life, I find it difficult to agree as to means. I believe that those who value these ends must temporarily submit to the yoke of organization and co-operation, since otherwise they will be crushed in detail by clever energetic maniacs. If one could believe in some cosmic purpose, worked out through the folly and wickedness of men, it might be possible to wait patiently for the happy consummation. But if one believes that there is no purpose in the non-human world—at any rate in that part of it with which we are in contact—it is useless to look to anything but human effort to extricate us from the dangers of the time. Science and machinery have given men new powers over nature and over each other. Unfortunately, the more humane portion of mankind is also the less executive portion, and therefore the new powers have fallen into

the hands of men who use them almost wholly to produce misery and crush out whatever is excellent and spontaneous or individual. Unless the champions of humanism rouse themselves to enter the practical world and make themselves masters of the new powers, their cause is doomed.

It is possible, however, that this outlook is mistaken, and that the serpent may be charmed by sweet songs. Men may grow weary of strenuous futility; the ideal of "efficiency" may lose its appeal. If so, what is most needed is to set forth persuasively the conception of life as an art. *The Dance of Life* does this with great charm; every page is interesting, and the author has our sympathy throughout. May his words, and those of men who feel as he does, prove potent beyond our expectation.

BERTRAND RUSSELL

THE MANTUAN

VIRGIL AND HIS MEANING TO THE WORLD OF TO-DAY.
By J. W. Mackail. 12mo. 159 pages. Marshall
Jones Company. \$1.50.

VIRGIL: A BIOGRAPHY. By Tenney Frank. 8vo. 200
pages. Henry Holt and Company. \$2.

PROFESSOR MACKAIL'S little book on Virgil, in the Our Debt to Greece and Rome series, is an attempt to "sell" that poet to "the World of To-Day." That such an attempt is in order just now was recently demonstrated in the course of a symposium on "the ten dullest authors" in which no less than two eminent literary characters—one of them a professional critic—voted Virgil one of the world's greatest bores. It is to such an audience as this that Professor Mackail's book is primarily addressed, and I am not sure that he does not err a little in overpraising his author—or rather in praising him uncritically. But on the whole the book is admirable for its purpose; it infects the reader with the peculiar glow of luminous enthusiasm which is characteristic of Mackail and which makes him such a charming writer on the classics. I wish, however, that the editors of this interesting series would not insist so upon emphasizing the "Meaning" of their subjects to the "World of To-Day." In this case, the editor writes a preface explaining that Professor Mackail "has presented us with a study of *the significance of Virgil to the twentieth century*"—and then Mackail goes ahead—quite rightly—and writes a book which commends Virgil to our attention on the strength of his absolute literary and intellectual merits—in other words, of his chief claims to significance to the world of any day.

Professor Frank's book is quite different; it is a new biography of Virgil from rather a fresh point of view. Professor Frank has examined all the evidence for himself and deferred to no one else's judgement about it, with the result that he accepts as genuine most of the doubtful poems ascribed to Virgil and on the strength of them reconstructs a very complete record of his movements and his

intellectual development. He concludes that Virgil was not a peasant and the son of a humble potter, but the son of a landed proprietor who also owned a pottery; that he sat at the feet of Epicurean masters and was always Epicurean rather than Stoic; that the pastoral setting of the Eclogues is not an impossible medley, as Mackail, for instance, contends, but neither Mantuan nor Sicilian and merely the scenery of southern Italy; that Virgil was not driven out of his farm after the battle of Philippi, but was living comfortably at Naples at the time that the evictions occurred and wrote his poems on the subject merely as general protests in favour of Mantua; and decides many other controversial questions in unorthodox fashion. No doubt Professor Frank is very certain about a great many things which no one can know anything about—since the evidence on Roman civilization seems so incomplete as actually to make certainties in matters of this kind very difficult, at the same time that it is considerable enough to arouse scholars with a gift for the fiction of historical criticism into constructing any number of equally plausible and directly contradictory legends; but I cannot help sympathizing with Professor Frank in his hospitality toward the disputed poems, as I have been bored all too long by editors who, never having written a line of poetry themselves or known anybody else who has written one and consequently not understanding that the noblest of poets write also ribaldry and nonsense and that a man begins by imitating other poets and may write half a dozen styles before he has mastered his own, insist that Shakespeare could not have written the brothel scenes in *Pericles* because they do not sound the way *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* sound to people incapable of listening to what Shakespeare actually wrote, and that Virgil could not have written the *Aetna* because it sounds like an echo of Lucretius, when Virgil even in his maturest work was always in the habit of dropping into the manner of Lucretius when he wanted a passage of natural philosophy. In any case, Professor Frank, though he may build some of his statements about Virgil on rather an uncertain soil, brings Rome itself much nearer than such books usually do; one feels that he has been there to see and brought back a first-hand account. To him Maecenas and Cicero are contemporaries, not monuments. His forthcoming history of Rome should be of unusual interest. My only objection to his portrait of Virgil would be that he has concerned himself

almost entirely with the events of Virgil's public life and the development of his ideas; he makes no psychological portrait; you hear nothing of Virgil's emotional life—about which his poetry suggests some curious speculations. I suppose someone will presently psycho-analyse him and poor *pious* Aeneas and his dreams will stand naked in the lecture-room.

But in the meantime, what is of prime importance is to maintain Virgil's reputation as a poet. Venturing to mention him about a year ago in a company of literary persons I was greeted by hoots and jeers; the grand manner was denounced; and it was generally conceded that no celebrated writer—except Milton—had been so thoroughly discredited. The explanation of the attitude of these people, most of whom were certainly capable of appreciating poetry, and of the two men I mentioned at the beginning of this article is partly, I think, a phobia acquired in boyhood from having had to read the Aeneid in school. We shy instinctively at Virgil in later life, just as we do at the Bible, because we remember it as something intolerably dreary and largely unintelligible which we had to slave over during pleasant afternoons when we would much rather have been doing something else. And I do not much blame schoolboys for being bored with the first few books of the Aeneid which they are usually compelled to read: the fine things are at that age beyond their comprehension and the pseudo-Homeric machinery—the repetitions and conventional formulas which in Homer have all the romantic naïveté of a ballad refrain, in Virgil sound stiff and artificial and are boring to anybody. Besides, Virgil is such a poor story-teller and his characters are so pale. It may be an infantile prejudice on my own part, but I have never been able to feel that even the grand *pièce de résistance* of the Fourth Book, the episode of Dido and Aeneas, is much of a dramatic success. Dido is ordinarily described as passionate, but she is fluent rather than passionate and, as H. W. Garrod says, even in her most tempestuous outbursts she remembers all the rules of rhetoric. No real conflict takes place between her and Aeneas because Aeneas is completely indifferent; he seems to have no reactions at all one way or the other; and one cannot escape the notion that the poet himself shared not a little of the indifference of his hero. I see no reason for believing that Virgil, whom the Neapolitans called Parthenias, was especially interested in women or that he was emo-

tionally capable of dramatizing the Aeneas-Dido situation. To me, Dido is far more real and charming when Aeneas meets her afterwards in Hades and she listens silent to his excuses with her eyes upon the ground and when he has finished simply runs unfriendly away to the wood where her first husband will comfort her.

And this illustrates the peculiar vein in which Virgil was particularly successful—the vein of the *lacrimae rerum*, of the deep sadness in all mortal life which “moves the mind.” In this elegiac mood, which seems to have represented his most natural and his habitual poetical reaction to life, he writes not narrative, but music; he takes an incident or a figure and diffuses it into exquisite cadences of tenderness; the theme is dissolved like the shapes of a dream into the emotion of the poet. Dido in life is unconvincing; among the shades she is lovely. And Palinurus, even before he reaches Hades and in relating the simple story of his death seems to breathe the pathos of the frustration of all human endeavour, moves already in the vagueness of a dream—all alone on the sleeping sea, tempted softly between sleeping and waking by the bodiless voices of the night. What is most moving, most *felt*, in the Eclogues?—the eviction of the Mantuan farmers—*Nunc victi, tristes, quoniam Fors omnia versat*. . . . What is most memorable in the Georgics?—a poem which is supposed to have been written as a glorification of the country, a piece of officially inspired propaganda for a back-to-the-land movement. Not, to my taste at any rate, the conscientious exaltation of Bacchus nor the elegant and rather conventional “*O fortunatos nimium*” passage; in this latter he speaks of the “*secura quies et nescia fallere vita*,” but the net effect of his poem is to make you feel with extreme poignancy that the country life like any other both deceives and fails mankind. It is a sad struggle to wring a living from Nature: the sun dries up your crops; your orchards catch fire and burn down; your cattle get stung by snakes or are wiped out by the plague. All the greatest things in the Georgics are tragic: the description of northern Italy laid waste with the cattle-plague—*desertaque regna Pastorum, et longe saltus lateque vacantes*; the magnificent passage about the civil wars with its prayer to the gods for peace and the pathos and longing of its vision of the quiet farmer some day turning up with his plough the naked bones and the

empty helmets of Philippi; and finally the lovely, the incomparable legend of Orpheus and Eurydice. The circumstances of the inclusion of this last would seem especially to throw light on the character of Virgil's poetic feeling in its pure state. According to Mackail, the *Georgics* originally ended with an encomium of Gallus, Virgil's brilliant friend and fellow poet, then vice-regent of Egypt; but when Gallus disgraced himself, was recalled and exiled, and finally committed suicide, Virgil cancelled his conclusion and had to make shift for another. The episode of Orpheus and Eurydice seems so remote from the structure and style of the rest of the poem that one may guess that it was something which Virgil had written independently and merely happened to have about—in fact, that when he was not labouring over the ambitious semi-official themes of the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* he dropped naturally into the writing of sweet sorrowful charming idyls—the dim shades drifting like birds driven by the winter storms, the rescued nymph vanishing like smoke between her lover's helpless hands, the unpeppable gate-keeper of Hades barring the muddy stream, and the lover still vainly calling "Eurydice!" when his head has been riven from his body, till the last echo of his love has died with her name among the lonely river banks.

But what shall be said of the grand manner, which has been so savagely outlawed among us since the realists and the imagists have declared war upon rhetoric—which seems to prevent many intelligent people from supposing that there can be anything in Virgil at all? Well, there is probably a certain margin of rhetoric in everything that Virgil wrote; but it is not like the pseudo-classic rhetoric for which people probably mistake it; it is not like the rhetoric of the Renaissance. It is silly to say, as I have heard people do, that Catullus is a genuine lyric poet and Virgil merely a goldsmith of noble sentiments (I even know one man who contends that Ovid was a more genuine poet than Virgil). The problem is to disengage Virgil's own lyric strain, which, though less varied than Catullus', is equally genuine. Besides, in the first place, Virgil should be forgiven even his emotionally uninteresting passages for his superb artistic integrity. One must remember that, though in both ancient and modern times he has exfloreated into all sorts of overpowering blossoms, he has also inspired in Dante the sharpest, the most sincere, and the least florid style which has perhaps ever been seen.

The Georgics is surely the Madame Bovary of the ancient world. This composition, so different from the imperfect and unfinished, the sometimes shadowy or wooden Aeneid, that epic which he himself on his death-bed had left orders that his friends should destroy, is one of the most extraordinary pieces of literary virtuosity and one of the greatest examples of the mastery over language ever produced. Every line is a technical triumph; every word is the right word. Even when the subject is quite dull or prosaic, as it not infrequently is, the poet has bent all his energy to presenting it in the most intense and concentrated form and in a manner exactly suited to the matter. In seven years, the colours, the movements, the sounds of the country life of ancient Italy were fixed for eternity. The ravens still flap in the trees; the snake still glides out in his new skin; the bees still buzz by their mossy ponds to their oleaster-shaded nests. You will say perhaps that this is a mere *tour de force* which no serious poet should ever have attempted, that Virgil might better have gone on writing brief pastorals, like the Eclogues, all his life. But there is a genuine poetic emotion which carries off both the Georgics and the Aeneid, though it is not of precisely the same lyric character as the *lacrimae rerum*. It is the devotion to the idea of Rome. It is a little hard for us in twentieth century America to understand this intense enthusiasm for an official political and social ideal; we are inclined to think that Virgil's outbursts about Rome are like our Fourth of July orations. But there is an actual poetic conviction about the rhetoric of such passages as "*O passi graviores!*"; and from the time when the peasant in the First Eclogue tells of having seen the imperial city, and the hexameter, distending, resounds with a thunderous rumour, to the climax of the Sixth Book of the Aeneid when Anchises announces to Aeneas the supremacy and the moral grandeur of the city which he is about to found (*Tu regere imperio populos, Romanes, memento*) Rome stands behind all that Virgil wrote as a passion profoundly felt. He conceived that the ideals of his civilization were a proper subject for poetry and that a life-time devoted to setting them to verse, though it involved the most interminable patience and the most exacting labour, was a life-time well spent.—Ah, Virgil, I am afraid that all Professor Mackail's eloquence will never sell you to "the world of to-day": for one thing you took life too slowly and for another you took poetry too seriously.

EDMUND WILSON

AN EAGLE IN THE RING

COLLECTED POEMS. By *Vachel Lindsay*. 8vo. 290 pages. The Macmillan Company. \$3.50.

THE outstanding impression made by Mr Lindsay's collected poems is that the author pities the fallen, deploras misunderstandings, and is saddened that the spirit should so often be at the mercy of the body. One cannot but revere his instinctive charity and determination to make a benevolent ordering of the universe possible. One knows that it is not an assumed attitude which leads Mr Lindsay to say:

"I want live things in their pride to remain.
I will not kill one grasshopper vain,
Though he eats a hole in my shirt like a door.
I let him out, give him one chance more."

"Love's a gamble, say you. I deny.
Love's a gift. I love you till I die.
Gamblers fight like rats. I will not play.
All I ever had I gave away."

It is a fine courage that enables a writer to let himself loose in the religious revival sense of the term at the risk of being thought an unintentional clown. It is impossible not to respect Mr Lindsay's preoccupation with humanitarianism, but at the same time to deplore his lack of aesthetic rigour. In a lover of the chant, one expects a metronomelike exactness of ear; it is the exception, however, when the concluding lines of Mr Lindsay's stanzas are not like a top which totters, or a hoop which rolls crazily before it finally stops. We have:

"Murdered in filth in a day,
Somehow by the merchant gay!"

and as the final lines of a poem:

"The urchins of the sky,
Drying their wings from storms and things
So they again can fly."

It is difficult to enunciate the words in such lines as:

"With my two bosomed blossoms gay"

"Like rivers sweet and steep,
Deep rock-clefts before my feet"

L

"You were a girl-child slight."

One is disaffected even in the mood of informal discursiveness by adjacent terminal words such as calculation, Appalachian; whole, jowl; ore, floor; trial, vile; fire, the higher; and

"Join hands,
Poets,
Companions"

is a metrical barbarism. Why, in a Dirge for a Righteous Kitten, "His shirt was always laundried well"? What of the prose lines, "A special tang for those who are tasty"? And in the phrase, "when the statue of Andrew Jackson . . . is removed," we have that popular weak misuse of the present tense which we have in such an expression as "I hope he gets there." There is a lack of neat thinking in such phrases as "Lining his shelves with books from everywhere" and "All in the name of this or that grim flag." There is inexactness of meaning in

"The long handclasp you gave
Still shakes upon my hands."

Usefulness is contradicted by the copybook concept of Dante:

"Would we were lean and grim, and shaken with hate
Like Dante, fugitive, o'erwrought with cares,"

and to speak of "Christ, the beggar," is inexact since it has never been said of Christ that he begged; he did without. One questions the cogency of Mr Lindsay's thought when he says in alluding to the San Francisco earthquake, "Here where her God has scourged her." Not that San Francisco was or is a godly city, but many another city has gone unscourged.

As a visionary, as an interpreter of America, and as a modern primitive—in what are regarded as the three provinces of his power, Mr Lindsay is hampered to the point of self-destruction by his imperviousness to the need for aesthetic self-discipline. Many poets have thoughts that are similar, in which case, only heedlessness prevents the author of the less perfect product from giving place to the author of the stronger, and much of Mr Lindsay's collected work is unfortunate in thus provoking comparison with attested greatness. Unfortunate also, is the conscious altering of great familiar expressions:

"The times are out of joint! O cursed spite!
The noble jester Yorick comes no more"

"What Nations sow, they must expect to reap"

"Within the many mansions,
[the hosts] . . .
Slept long by crooning springs."

"Did you waste much money
To deck a leper's feast"

and the context, provoke comparison with *The Vision of Sir Launfal*. In *The Mysterious Cat*, the line repeated three times, "Did you ever hear of a thing like that," recalls *The Three Blind Mice*; *Eden in Winter* recalls *Ralph Hodgson's Eve*. *Star of My Heart*, *At Mass*, and *Foreign Missions in Battle Array*, recall such classics as *We Three Kings of Orient Are* and *Onward Christian Soldiers*, and *The Last Song of Lucifer* seems like a mild transcript of *Paradise Lost*.

"In that strange curling of her lips,
That happy curling of her lips,"

comparison is simultaneously provoked, with E. E. Cummings and with Poe. The Fairy Bridal Hymn embodies without the aureole of distinguished effect of separateness, the feeling in Blake's account of a fairy's funeral and in The Wedding of the Lotus and the Rose, the lines:

"Above the drownèd ages,
A wind of wooing blows,"

unconsciously to Mr Lindsay no doubt, but suicidally, recall Swinburne.

Although it was not intended that the poems should be read to oneself, they will, on occasion, be so read, and so surely as they are it is inevitable that the author will in certain respects be presented amiss. Certain repetitions suggest the pleonasm of the illiterate preacher who repeats a phrase in order to get time to formulate another:

"Love is not velvet, not all of it velvet"

"When a million million years were done
And a million million years beside,"

We have not that reinforcing of sentiment which we have in reiteration by Yeats:

"She pulled the thread and bit the thread,
And made a golden gown."

In his essay on Poetic Diction, Robert Bridges says, "the higher the poet's command of diction, the wider may be the field of his Properties; . . . and this is a very practical point, if a writer with no command of imaginative diction, should use such Properties as are difficult of harmonization, he will discredit both the Properties and the Diction." Despite the fact that Mr Lindsay's properties are abundant and often harmonious as in the fantasy of the gipsies:

"Dressed, as of old, like turkey-cocks and zebras,
Like tiger-lilies and chameleons,"

the grouping is often conspicuously self-destructive. One feels that

"Percival and Bedivere
And Nogi side by side"

distract one from the poet's meaning as do the statesmen, artists, and sages, in *The Litany of the Heroes*: Amenophis Fourth—Hamlet and Keats "in one"—Moses, Confucius, Alexander, Caesar, St Paul, "Augustine," Mohammed, St Francis, Dante, Columbus, Titian, Michael Angelo, Shakespeare, Milton, Napoleon, Darwin, Lincoln, Emerson, Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Socrates. Like paintings in public buildings of the world's cultural and scientific progress, such groups sacrifice impact to inclusiveness. Johnny Appleseed is marred, one feels, by such phrases as "the bouncing moon," and

"He laid him down sweetly, . . .
Like a bump on a log, like a stone washed white."

We rejoice in the resilience of imagination in the idea of a grasshopper as "the Brownies' racehorse," "the fairies' Kangaroo"; and in *The Golden Whales of California*, there is controlled extravagance in the enumeration of "the swine with velvet ears," "the sacred raisins," "the trees which climb so high the crows are dizzy," "the snake fried in the desert," but "the biggest ocean in the world," and the whales "whooping that their souls are free," suggest the tired European's idea of America and the fantasy which visualizes St Francis in the mere literal appropriateness of an etymological pun, offends by its conception of:

"The venturesome lovers . . .
In a year and a month and a day of sailing
Leaving the whales and their whoop unfailing
On through the lightning, ice and confusion
North of the North Pole,
South of the South Pole
And west of the west of the west of the west."

Objecting further, it is impossible not to say that Mr Lindsay's

phrases of negro dialect are a deep disappointment. A familiarity with negroes and the fact that the adaptations are intentional cannot absolve such Aryan doggerel as:

"And we fell by the altar
And we fell by the aisle,
And found our Savior
In just a little while."

Such lines are startlingly at variance with real negro parallelism as we have it in:

"Oh, Hell am deep 'n Hell am wide
an' you can't touch bottom on either side"

and are incompatible with that perfect fragment of negro cadence which Mr Lindsay has combined with it, "Every time I hear the spirit moving in my heart I'll pray." A stentorianly emphatic combining of the elements of the black genius and the white, but emphasizes their incompatibility. In *The Congo*, the "Baboon butler in the agate door," "And hats that were covered with diamond-dust" are pale substitutes for

"Baboon butler at the door,
Diamond carpet on the floor."

In the *Booker Washington Trilogy*,

"the oak secure,
Weaving its leafy lure,
Dreaming by fountains pure
Ten thousand years"

recalls *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. The *Daniel*, and *Simon Legree* have intermittently fantasy and beat, but the refrain, fabricated or authentic, "Let Samson be coming into your mind" is inexplicable from any point of view. In stage directions, the most expert craftsmen such as Shaw and Yeats barely escape pedantry and one feels that however necessary to Mr Lindsay's conception

of the spoken word particular information may be, when he asks us "to keep as lightfooted as possible," to read "orotund fashion," "with heavy buzzing bass," et cetera, one can but feel, unfairly or not, that he is subordinating a poorly endowed audience to wit which he proposes to furnish.

Some of Mr Lindsay's work would lead one to infer that "a man is out on three wide balls but walks on four good strikes." The literary reader tends not to be compensated by moral fervour for technical misapprehensions, but there is life in any kind of beauty and in these poems avoidance of grossness and the entirely vengeful, is fortifying. *Why I Voted the Socialist Ticket* is full of contagious vigour:

"I am unjust, but I can strive for justice.
My life's unkind, but I can vote for kindness.
I, the unloving, say life should be lovely.
I, that am blind, cry out against my blindness,"

but in his *Curse for Kings*, Mr Lindsay gives the effect of an emotional pacifism which is incompatible with earnestness.

"This whole book is a weapon in a strenuous battlefield," Mr Lindsay says; "practically every copy will be first opened on the lap of some person . . . trying to follow me as I recite as one follows the translation of the opera libretto." He is not to be refuted. There is a perhaps not very exact analogy between him in his *rôle* of undismayed, national interpreter, and a certain young eagle conveyed by American naval officers to the Philippines, styled "an American rooster," and pitted invariably with mortal consequence against Philippine gamecocks.

If a reader felt no responsibility for a writer, and were merely culling felicities, certain of Mr Lindsay's poems would undoubtedly give complete pleasure; disregarding as a whole the poem, *How a Little Girl Danced*, there is a fine accuracy in the lines:

"With foot like the snow, and with step like the rain."

There is suggested fragility in the poem *game of yellow butterflies*:

"They shiver by the shallow pools. . . .
They drink and drink. A frail pretense!"

There is beauty in The Dandelion; especially also, in The Flower of Mending:

"When moths have marred the overcoat
Of tender Mr Mouse."

And the lines:

"Factory windows are always broken.
Somebody's always throwing bricks,"

are expertly captivating. Lincoln is not added to, but he is not travestied in Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight; there is glory in the conception of Alexander Campbell stepping "from out the Brush Run Meeting House": and reality in Bryan:

"With my necktie by my ear, I was stepping on my dear. . . .
The earth rocked like the ocean, the sidewalk was a deck.
The houses for the moment were lost in the wide wreck."

We have in this poem, some of Gertrude Stein's power of "telling what you are being while you are doing what you are doing," and there is "blood within the rhyme" in:

"The banjos rattled and the tamborines
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of Queens."

MARIANNE MOORE

BRIEFER MENTION

CAPTURES, by John Galsworthy (12mo, 305 pages; Scribner: \$2) opens with what is easily the most important story in the volume—*A Feud*. It is a beautifully balanced tale, rich with the atmosphere of the English countryside and the emotional implications so largely depending thereon. In a sense complementary to this is *The Man Who Kept His Form*, apotheosizing the quiet, triumphant changelessness of the English aristocrat despite apparent failure. The sketches following these two stories, although gleaming with the fine, reserved words that have power to convey subtle insights, are disconcertingly slight and by-the-way. Galsworthy emphasizes the artificiality of the form he so competently, and sometimes exquisitely, masters.

GREY WETHERS, by V. Sackville-West (12mo, 328 pages; Doran: \$2) has its origin and validity in the setting. The author has tried to symbolize the English downs by typifying their outstanding moods in the characters, their grandeur and immutability in the action of her story. Although the stern freedom that is their keynote is excessively romanticized, a greyly glamorous generalization has been effected; but neither the downs nor their personification have been arrested in any specific, distinctive dramatization. Miss Sackville-West has done well to limit her subject matter more vigorously than in *Challenge*; her development of it has gained correspondingly in directness and a well-contained richness.

WEIRD TALES, by E. T. W. Hoffmann, translated from the German by J. T. Bealby (12mo, 344 pages; Scribner: \$2.50). "But wonderful are the doings of Accident!" the author is moved to exclaim in one of his stories, while elsewhere a character finds that "accident came to his rescue." With this rather lenient attitude towards his craft, Hoffmann could let his parlour fantasy play about a world of people who, while not subtle enough figures to compel interest in their characters, usually possess sufficiently marked attributes to interest us in their welfare. Hoffmann's "weirdness," however, is a little too much like the dungeon scene in one-night-stand opera, where the massive canvas rocks sway slightly as the curtain rises. Much more authentic is the appeal of an occasional passage which reconstructs the somewhat ceremonious but amiable times in which the author lived and for which his work was best adapted.

MALICE, by Pierre MacOrlan (16mo, 242 pages; G. Crés: Paris). There is a golem, a devil in shape of an old Jew, a young man who trades his soul for a rope to hang himself: in short, all the machinery of German romantic novels of the early nineteenth century, but employed ironically against the strictly modern background of the city of Mainz in 1922. Malice has the air of being an Expressionist poster to advertise the spectacle of moral decay, naively vicious, but not unaesthetic, which is one side only of Germany since the war.

DOBACHI, by John Ayscough (12mo, 284 pages; Macmillan: \$2). Prevailing tendencies in fiction have not bothered Mr Ayscough; his novel is about as old-fashioned as a felt boot, and put together with approximately the same degree of grace. The narrative, with its setting a New England village of Cornish puritans, fails to come to life under the prodding of a laborious pen; the author accepts defeat at the hands of his heroine with only two-thirds of the book written and sighs: "All this happened long before I was born: no record of her suspicions has been handed down, and I do not choose to guess at her feelings in the matter." Mr Ayscough, it appears, is a novelist who takes no liberties.

BREAD, by Charles Gilman Norris (12mo, 511 pages; Dutton: \$2) may be edible, but it is neither nutritious nor palatable. The author is an indiscriminatingly voluble slave of the realistic school with no suspicion that by showing the romance of the commonplace the commonplace itself may be revealed. He has dedicated an egregiously drab book to the proposition that existence is a bad business. In a style as formless as an amoeba he emulates the specious exactitude of Sinclair Lewis and the mania of Upton Sinclair for persecuting maladjustments. His report bears the same distortive resemblance to life that stenographic symbols have to the words they stand for.

AN OUTLAW'S DIARY: Revolution, by Cecile Tormay (8vo, 291 pages; McBride: \$3) is a record of a patrician's reactions to the subversion of the old order which took place in Hungary in 1918. Patriotism and conservatism are the author's fetishes. There is no attempt at an unbiased viewpoint in the book, and too little discrimination between fact and hearsay. The unrelieved extravagance of emotions at times arouses the reader's impatience, until he reasons that probably it was in just proportion to the tumultuous terrors of the time. And, since scepticism of the underlying sincerity is inadmissible, he cannot shut out the hysterical cry of impassioned resentment and cumulative despair.

THE ANCIENT BEAUTIFUL THINGS, by Fannie Stearns Davis (12mo, 82 pages; Macmillan: \$1). The author paints upon a narrow canvas, and is at her best when picturing the fireside and the cradle; but, within her limited fields, she writes with a directness and a genuineness of emotion. The book is impressive because the impulse behind it is obviously authentic.

THE DREAM AND OTHER POEMS, by John Masefield (12mo, 63 pages; Macmillan: \$1.25). An old mood many times expressed in earlier poems runs through Masefield's new book. The old richness and mellowness are here too, but the poems seem slighter than those of the former volumes, and the metre is so unvaried and so balanced as to be very slightly soporific. Vision and interpretation have taken on a more sombre cast, but for all that Masefield has little to fear in competition with any other poet among either the older or the younger Georgians. It is only his own earlier works with which this new volume does not bear comparison.

THE BALLAD OF ST BARBARA AND OTHER VERSES, by Gilbert Keith Chesterton (12mo, 85 pages; Putnams: \$2.50) prove that the author has never captivated that subtle thing of melody and magic whose name is poetry. The melody, indeed, he has mastered, but he has none of the magic of the Muse; something prosaic and sodden weighs down the very spirit of his book; and, in spite of all Mr Chesterton's apt rhymes and graceful rhythms, one fails to find any trace of that graphic imagery or of that emotional or imaginative fervour for which a poem may be memorable.

THE SUN CHASER, by Jeanette Marks (12mo, 119 pages; Stewart Kidd: \$1.75). This play is marked by careful character delineations and by a vague and poetic symbolism that at times seems in danger of losing itself in skeins of imagination, but that for the most part is employed with subtlety and restraint. Occasionally the author appears to be tiptoeing on the verge of melodrama, but she never lets herself quite fall beyond the verge. Her work on the whole is shadow-haunted, but impressive.

THIRTEEN WORTHIES, by Llewellyn Powys (16mo, 221 pages; American Library Service: \$1.75) is a pleasant echo of the virile voices of Chaucer, Bunyan, William Barnes, Hardy, and other men intimate with the soil, strong and whole-hearted in piety or gaiety. Simple, "earth-bound" spirits they seem to Mr Powys; he disregards the complexities implicit in the very existence of their works. The essays in their unpretentiousness and slowness seem shy; and would seem youthful, but for a quality of gentle melancholy. The author too modestly disavows original thoughts by the frequent use of quotations, but he gives character to names lodged away from every-day memory, and his genuine joy in his subjects is shared by the reader.

ROMAN PICTURES, by Percy Lubbock (12mo, 221 pages; Scribner: \$3) is in every sense an exquisite performance—the work of a true stylist to whom the English language is still a temple of matchless masonry, inviting the hand of the craftsman decorator. There is not a careless phrase in the book; the pattern is as intricate as it is beautiful. In mood, these reminiscences have the same tone which was to be found in Earlham, but here there is greater richness, a more abundant ease, and a touch of high humour. Altogether, an accomplishment which the author—as an enlightened disciple—might lay before Henry James and be confident of the verdict.

SOME MAKERS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, by William Lyon Phelps (12mo, 187 pages; Marshall Jones: \$2.50). From this series of lectures, delivered at Dartmouth, one learns that Emerson was an "ardent American," that Mark Twain was "the great American Democrat," that Hawthorne was "a glory to American literature," and as for Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin—"if we could take the best in both, and unite the combination in one person, we should have the ideal American." The lectures must have been delivered from a flag-draped rostrum, or was there a chautauqua at Hanover?

GODS OF MODERN GRUB STREET, by A. St John Adcock, with thirty-two portraits after photographs by E. O. Hoppé (12mo, 326 pages; Stokes: \$2.50) is a collection of notes documenting Mr Hoppé's photographs. Mr Adcock furnishes the bones of biography, with some timid comments—this book seems better than that, or a certain book is about this or that; but he fails to possess, or submerges, any particular appetites in literature. His writing lacks personality; and he is the perfect "book in breeches." Mr Hoppé's portraits are very plain and public—an identifiable mask and conventional posing of hands and pipe in a moderate murk. Nevertheless certain faces, such as Hardy's or Hilaire Belloc's, are like to endure as he has recorded them. It is pleasant to see Mr E. Phillips Oppenheim's mild proletariat face, not unlike the late John Bunny's, Mr McKenna's ideal aristocracy, and Miss Kaye-Smith's acrid sunniness. But in this case the quality of godliness is success; and the book would have more interest if they had sought certain distinguished faces which the great publishers have not yet made as trite as the Smith Brothers'.

MEN OF LETTERS, by Dixon Scott, with an Introduction by Max Beerbohm (12mo, 313 pages; Doran: \$3). England's long alienation from constructive movements in the other arts has intensified a remarkable impure delight in literature, in which a dim sense of design and formal beauty became inextricably confused with accidental and social interests. That the critic dominated the reader and not the writer is indicated by the fact that a school of ornate romantic critics preceded a group of novels strictly designed, of an intricate cold carved quality, which irritated and dismayed the unprepared public. The late Mr Dixon Scott says that "one of the chief joys of criticism is the joy of detection—an actual hounding-down of a live human being," with no suspicion that this pleasure ought to be somewhat illicit. His comments are sensitive and shapely, but mostly a little beside the point. True critical acumen, which reproduces in diagram the process of creation, is a little overlaid by the irrelevant things he saw in his subject. That he possessed it is clear in the Whitman note. He observed Whitman's all but secure position between poetical rhetoric and exact creation; and wrote of the poignance of his particular in sharp relief against the universal, his image against a primitive atmosphere, as in Oriental verse.

HARMONISM AND CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION, by Sir Charles Walston (12mo, 463 pages; Macmillan: \$6). The sequel to the dictum that "everything flows" is the discovery of the unchanging principle which underlies this flow. Sir Charles Walston, then, is writing the sequel to pragmatism when he attempts to bring the emphasis on the free creative will back to some principle underlying this will. And he sees what the pragmatists have missed: that the creative will involves first of all an aesthetic principle rather than an ethical one. But we do wish that this really vital formulation of aesthetic priority had permeated the author's style more deeply, so that his plea for beauty in living might have been more a thing of beauty in itself.

COMMENT

WE are uncertain whether what we observe is a new New Hellenism or merely a higher Hellenism. The Greek spirit is, in any case, with us; and we are charmed.

The Greeks are supposed to have been lovers of beauty and of wisdom; indeed it may be their peculiar and happy character to have been able to love both. But, as an eminent philosopher once informed an undergraduate, their love of beauty would never have led them to tolerate, for a moment, such works of art as were dangerous to the state. Again it would seem that fortune was kind to them; except for speculations they found nothing in the Parthenon hostile to good government and the Established Church.

But if we can't all be happy, we can be active; and it is good to note that even in organizations which are avowedly unpolitical (yet we fancy that a Greek would not have understood "unpolitical" except as a term of reproach) there is a definite tendency to look jealously upon works of art and to discover whether the political organism may not deteriorate because of them. A hero writes a wicked book and it is moved and seconded that he should lose his medals; that is one of those famous first steps which count; we shall presently impeach a President for using too many loose sentences. The great thing for us is that all of the protests against art and letters, protests which fancy themselves purely moral, concede more than they withhold. They are abject in the presence of art—a nice position to maintain—and even if they overvalue the influence of art, acknowledge its legitimacy and its relevance to life.

It remains for the arts to do the handsome thing—and they are doing it. "Life" becomes the touchstone of literary endeavour—not "true to life" but "serving life" the standard of measurement. "Life" in these connexions means the present problem—not the eternal; and it will presently be improper, if not impossible, for a writer to concern himself with a theme which has no bearing on revolutions, applied psychology, or, in general, the moral and physical catastrophe which, we have been assured, impends.

Over Mr T. S. Eliot's initials there appear in the current number of *The Criterion*, some brief words on this subject:

" . . . For in our time the pursuit of literary perfection, and the preoccupation with literature and art for their own sake, are objects of attack, no longer in the name of 'morals,' but in the name of a much more insidious catchword: 'life.' I say 'more dangerous,' because the term 'morals,' at worst, stands for some order or system, even if a bad one; whereas 'life,' with much vaguer meaning, and therefore much greater possibilities of unctiousness, may be merely a symbol of chaos. Those, however, who affirm an antinomy between 'literature,' meaning any literature which can appeal only to a small and fastidious public, and 'life,' are not only flattering the complacency of the half-educated, but asserting a principle of disorder.

"It is not, certainly, the function of a literary review to provide material for the chat of coteries—nor is a review called upon to avoid such appeal. A literary review should maintain the application, in literature, of principles which have their consequences also in politics and in private conduct; and it should maintain them without tolerating any confusion of the purposes of pure literature with the purposes of politics or ethics.

"In the common mind all interests are confused, and each degraded by the confusion. And where they are confused, they cannot be related; in the common mind any specialized activity is conceived as something isolated from life, an odious task or a pastime of mandarins. To maintain the autonomy, and the disinterestedness, or every human activity, and to perceive it in relation to every other, require a considerable discipline. It is the function of a literary review to maintain the autonomy and the disinterestedness of literature, and at the same time to exhibit the relations of literature—not to 'life,' as something contrasted to literature, but to all the other activities, which, together with literature, are the components of life."

The note is entitled *The Function of a Literary Review*. We recommend the statement to our contemporaries.

THE THEATRE

HIGH Spots of the New Season: Ralph Barton's poster of the Lady Pincushion on the side-show tent in POPPY and W. C. Fields appearing for the first time in history in a speaking part (he proves to have a high tremulous tenor rather like a refined and appealing eloquent preacher). The spiritualist-detective play ZENO, which combines the sinister excitement of melodrama with the agreeable surprise of a conjuring performance. In this play, a man who wants to rob a safe commits a dangerous murder, stages a fake spiritualistic seance, fills the pockets of a whole assemblage of people with objects designed falsely to cast suspicion on them, and with the aid of a whole army of accomplices succeeds in installing highly complicated mechanical devices in a house in which people are living. There is no nonsense about explaining why he went to all this trouble—why, since he knew the combination, he didn't simply go and open the safe, instead of spending days and weeks filling the house with conjuring tricks; and that is why the play is fascinating; it is fascinating like one of Goldberg's devices for killing flies or eating soup without a spoon. The take-off on spiritualist-detective plays in the MUSIC BOX REVIEW—also, in this latter, Mr Benchley's great Endowment Fund speech and some of Irving Berlin's jazz counterpoint, especially the curious modernized waltz with its shivery opening descent, like sinking in an express elevator. The colours and costumes of the GREENWICH VILLAGE FOLLIES and some of the tumbling and trick dancing. Otherwise, the GREENWICH VILLAGE FOLLIES is not quite up to standard this year: it re-echoes a little forlornly in the WINTER GARDEN, which is much too big for it and seems, besides, to have infected it with banality. Miss Katharine Cornell's gorgeous blue and rose crinolines in CASANOVA—which, however, are the best thing in the production. Miss Cornell is extremely pretty in her eighteenth century costumes, but her performance is rather hollow. I tried hard, but I could not believe in her love affair with Casanova. But that is perhaps not altogether her fault: in the first place, Mr Lowell Sherman, though fairly plausible as a quick-witted knave, in emotional scenes is impossible; and in the second, the play itself is so

hollow that I doubt if very much is to be made of it. What Mr Woods and Mr Miller really need to carry off their investment in such magnificent costumes and in a set for an eighteenth century inn at Geneva which looks like the Japanese Room at the Ritz is a new play about Casanova.—And finally, I would commend the French screen version of Anatole France's *Crainquebille*—the best film I have ever seen, which almost shook my faith in the impossibility of the movie as a medium for dramatic art.

THE LULLABY is a new play by Mr Edward Knoblock. Mr Knoblock is, I am told, one of the three men in the English-speaking world who knows most about the theatre. He is a master of dramatic technique and has an unerring sense of the stage; he is an encyclopaedia of all the plots and situations of the last fifty years. The result is that, in **THE LULLABY**, you know the end of almost every one of Mr Knoblock's dozen or so scenes as soon as you have seen the beginning and that you find your lips automatically pronouncing with the actor the words of Mr Knoblock's speeches as soon as you have heard the first phrase. Yet I would rather see **THE LULLABY** than **THE CHILDREN OF THE MOON**, which is, I think, the most tedious play, bar none, I have ever sat completely through. The author has evidently tried to do something in the closely fitted, slightly symbolic later manner of Ibsen and the result is that he has reproduced the technique without either the poetry, the insight into character or the genius for dramatic effect. You sit there and watch the old Ibsen machine grinding along to its relentless close—but unfortunately there is no excitement in watching the wheels go 'round because it is evident that nothing is going to happen which you did not know about in the first place.

The **ITALIAN MARIONETTES** at the Frolic are the best I have ever seen. They are better than Tony Sarg's because they are less realistic. Tony Sarg followed the great modern fallacy and tried to make his puppets reproduce life—in one of his plays, I remember, he had a dog which might almost have been mistaken for a real dog. But the Italian marionettes are conventionalized and grotesque—what is the use of making artificial men if they are going to be exactly like real men? The Italian ones still have some of the naïve charm of the pre-realistic world. And their performance,

unlike that of Mr Sarg's, is throughout enlivened with music; instead of a play with dreary spoken speeches, there is the score of a little opera by Cesar Cui. But I really can't see a whole evening of marionettes for anybody but children; I don't know how they have got such a reputation in New York as an exotic and delightful form of entertainment. No person over the age of twelve should ever allow himself to get let in for a marionette performance.

I hereby relinquish this department back into the hands of Mr Gilbert Seldes, lately returned from abroad. Mr Seldes has been engaged in the composition of a series of essays—soon to be published in a book—on "the Seven Lively Arts," in which he has discussed vaudeville, the jazz band, and the musical revue with a flaming prophetic enthusiasm which I—with all admiration for his book—have sometimes thought a little excessive. Yet after witnessing a year of the American theatre I really begin to understand how he has arrived at his present opinions; "God knows," as Oscar Wilde said about the martyrs, "I am with him in some things!" It is true (though perhaps it has always been true) that a great many of the favourites of the "serious" theatre have not half so much that is genuine to offer—are, in fact, not half so near to being "artists"—as the favourites of vaudeville and the revue. Al Jolson has more dramatic conviction than Joseph Schildkraut. Gilda Gray and Queenie Smith are more inspired than Eva LeGallienne. Ed Wynn has a more interesting imagination than Mr Hartley Manners. Florenz Ziegfeld is a better producer than William Brady—or Arthur Hopkins. This doesn't necessarily mean that the jazz people are great artists, as there is a tendency in some quarters to believe; but merely that they come nearer to the mark than the legitimate performers who have education and technique without either personality or passion.—But I step aside for Mr Seldes, who will tell you about it much better than I.

EDMUND WILSON

MODERN ART

HAD I arrived two days sooner in Paris I should have seen the *décor* that Juan Gris made for the Ballet Russe charity performance in the Salle des Glaces at Versailles. Gertrude Stein had a card to see it privately in the afternoon and could have taken me. Gertrude liked it very much. From the description it certainly was new in idea—quantities of tin being used, covering the floor, I believe, and the steps to the platform, and gilt joining in—but startling only to those capable of being startled by ideas, for the passionately fashionable charitable folk who paid immense sums to attend seemed unaware that there was a *décor* there at all, taking the setting casually as a part of the original *salle*. Alice Toklas said it was not objectionable to walk upon—though any one who has ever attempted to walk upon a tin roof would recoil from dancing upon tin. But those Russians really are very expert and recoil from nothing.

That Juan Gris should be known to Diaghilev and that Braque, Picasso, and he should do *décors* for him is merely one hint that the pre-war receptivity is still on. Indeed the receptivity is almost frantic, but beyond the admittance of our own Man Ray to the ranks of the magicians there seems to be no new name to be learned. The Parisians are just dying to have an affair with some new artist, but the boldness of the blandishments they offer seems to frighten rather than attract, and young geniuses, if they exist, are incredibly coy. One does not hear of them even at the Café du Dôme. Speaking of blandishments, the Ballet Russe projects one of Molière's pieces with *musique* by Gounod re-arranged by Erik Satie and with a *décor* by Juan Gris. It is a project and not a certainty, but merely to think of such a combination is going some in the way of liberality; is it not?

Pascal gave me a miniature banquet—*moi qui vous parle*. That is, there were at least twenty at table and that, I think, entitles it to be called a banquet. I had supposed I was dining *seul*, but when I reached the top of the almost endless series of stairs on the Boulevard de Clichy I found ladies, exuberant children, a solid *bourgeois* who had been rendered more *distingué* by the loss of one eye

at the front—and a measurable family atmosphere that was a distinct surprise *chez* Pascin. In a minute we all descended to the street made more than usually noisy by the Fêtes de Montmartre then in progress and I did my share in marshalling the exuberant children among whom and the most so, was a young mulatress of about ten. As it couldn't possibly be a French party without somebody getting lost we promptly discovered that three or four of us were missing. But we soon found them. The one-eyed gentleman—whose name I never mastered—and several of the children were discovered astride the shiny fat pigs of the merry-go-round whirling in the air above our heads. Then we were re-united only to be separated again into different taxis for it seemed we were to go to the Café du Dôme for the *apéritifs*. The ride across town was extremely gay, made so by the children who were continually crying and waving to each other from the various vehicles and inciting the chauffeurs to race. Pascin and I had the young mulatress with us and she was enchanted that we won the race. We made a distinct sensation arriving at the Café du Dôme, and without in the least meaning to boast I think I may say that I shared the honours with the young mulatress. People did look at us. If there is receptivity for art in Paris there seems even to be plenty of this commodity for art critics and there was a constant stream of persons coming up to claim acquaintance not only with Pascin, but with me. So much so that we scarcely had a moment actually to sit and Mahonri Young who had thought perhaps he might be of service to a newcomer retired abashed after one curious glance at the young coloured person. The *café terrasse* was crowded with the usual early Saturday evening crowd of students, oh, so much more gaunt and hollow-cheeked than they had been two years before; or so they did seem to me, comfortable in the knowledge that I certainly was to have a dinner. This festivity took place finally in a restaurant over near the Bal Bullier and the eats and the spiritual uplift were quite all right though the one-eyed gentleman took the host to task for allowing the men to be seated at one end of the table solidly and the ladies at the other; "If there is any possible way to bungle it trust Pascin," said he, with affectionate wrath. It was this gentleman who owned the large touring car that awaited without and into which about ten of us were whisked to the Café Suédois later on, standing up or clinging to side-steps as best we could, college boy

style. Of the children who had gaily started out from Montmartre with us only the young mulatress was left and she was still maintaining a social status when I retreated from the Café Suédois at the discreet hour of *minuit*. At this party I met among others MacOrlan the writer and Laborde the artist, both of them keen and delightful, with worldly success apparently staring them in the face and André Salmon, the critic, equally delightful, but not so certain to get on in this life; and renewed acquaintance with Madame Pascin, one of the most remarkable women in Paris, which is saying much, and Mina Loy, the poetess.

At the banquet I asked Pascin when I could have a second look at his drawings and he suggested coming to lunch the Monday following. Galanis was there when I arrived and two young women who seemed not enthusiastic over my advent. Afterward I learned that Pascin had forgotten having asked them for Monday or had forgotten having asked me and they were promptly chased away. However they said *bon jour* with the calmness of duchesses and will have had it made up to them by Pascin later, doubtless. Then after Galanis left I was allowed to look through piles of drawings, including all the ones made in Tunis and which I like particularly, and the series of mocking allegories in which "*offrandes to Venus*" and hitherto suppressed details in the life of Scheherazade are lightly sketched. From the *débris* on the table I turned up two books, both of them inscribed. One was Paul Morand's *Fermé la Nuit* which contained on the fly-leaf the author's wish that Pascin might illustrate the work sometime. Morand is about to have his wish, I understand, Pascin having undertaken to do the drawings. The other book was by Cocteau also with compliments upon the fly-leaf. Then, too, Meier-Graefe is to do a Pascin album; so here is one artist at least who cannot complain of an indifferent press.

We lunched at the Café Manière. At the café we found MacOrlan and Laborde, both of whom were charming as usual and full of curiosity in regard to America. When I told MacOrlan that I had dined at Brancusi's and that Brancusi himself had acted as *chef* and had *énormément de talent comme cuisinier*, he said that to cook was quite *à la mode* now.

The dinner was wonderful—but gracious heavens—I see I have not left myself space enough in which to describe it. Believe me it would require space!

HENRY McBRIDE

MUSICAL CHRONICLE

JAZZ is a series of jerks. In rhythm, you do not have to be conscious of the one two, one two; or of the one two three, one two three. Not even in Mendelssohn. But in jazz, to get your pleasure, you have to count the beat. Because jazz is every old thing which has ever been, distorted. Anticipated a little; suspended a little. It is the most banal with tobasco sauce; beans with ketchup plentifully. Ten minutes of it used as entertainment, makes a bore. For dance music, it cannot compare with Viennese waltzes. You do not even have to go to Johann Strauss. Waldteufel, flat as he is.

But some people in Paris talk of the rhythms of jazz. Three times in a century, to gratify some vaguest longing—people in Paris have dreamed fantasies, and called them by the name of America. First, nostalgic Chateaubriand and the Natchez. The Apollo in the hide of the "*peau rouge*." Second, Baudelaire and the great pale American Christ. The great pallid American Christ wandering the streets of New York was Edgar Allan Poe. Third, certain fatigued contemporaries who, more or less because Marinetti stood on the prow of a dreadnaught in a Byronic frame of mind, mistake material brutishly used in America for primitive art. A steel-construction with Antwerp plastered over its flanks is architecture. "The Parthenon was built for use." The Parthenon, with the plumb of its columns subtly varied that the eye may be enchanted! Then, Charlot, Fattie, and Mees Pearrll White. The Saturday Evening insensibility as the American story. And jazz. The rhythms of jazz.

One wonders: have any of these charming dreamers ever seen or heard the objects they mistake for beauty, or clarity, or significance? They have seen Charlot. And, no doubt, his films are much funnier than the shows in Paris, though you do see some very funny ones at the Théâtre Nationale de l'Opéra, and at the Maison de Molière. But what is it they have really seen and heard? Some people opened a little place off the Place de la Madeleine, and Cocteau, who had made quite a success with the pieces of the battery in the performance of Milhaud's Choephores, insisted on play-

ing something which he qualified with the name "Jazz Americain." A great many ladies heard, and seemed greatly edified at having finally gotten the real right thing. But some friends, American—persuaded Cocteau to desist. And still, jazz is the American music, or the chrysalis of American music. And the machine and its products—must be accepted.

This Gerald Stanley Lee, Marinetti categorical imperative, has no importance for any one doing work either in the field of mechanics or that of art. The creative mechanic no more than the artist "accepts" the machine. Like his poetical brother, he has in his mind an ideal objective. And for the purpose of approaching that objective, he makes friends with his instrument, and drives it relentlessly to the limit of its capacities. There have always been machines, since ever the first humanoid took up a club and began freeing his mind; and between the man who drives the machine relentlessly to its limit and the man who tells a perfect story, there is no opposition. Both are driven by the selfsame need, the need of things of quality enrooted in the living human breast. Both are moving toward the same ideal goal. Neither is responsible for the mess rotting modern life. Responsible for that are, far more, the people moved by no ideal objective. The good-enough people in the field of machine-work. And the people who sit about, and talk.

Whether French people wanted us to be savages or no would be of no matter in the United States; all the talk of skyscraper primitive art would be harmless, were work proceeding here, and voices calling. The existing machinery, jazz, Charlie Chaplin, would find the artist, for the artist never has to go find the raw stuff of nature. But there is no faith among the American workers; and in all ages wanting inner direction, a subjective sense of inferiority drives men to searching for ready-made formulae before starting off on their adventures; and to playing up to the eyes of certain people whom they take pleasure in conceiving as superior to themselves. It is for this reason that the charming fantasies of contemporary France seem to us to contain a principle dangerous to the young art-men in America. These fantasies are supplying a number of embryonic artists with cheap formulae, keeping them from working from their sensibilities. They are also persuading a number of incipient advertising-men that they have something to

do with art, preventing them using their talents properly in selling tomato-sauce and soap. No doubt, the will to worship a lot of quarter-baked material will eventually be discarded by the determined artists, and lead the incipient advertisers to flattering millionaires more directly, and building up circulation for frankly millionaire-flattering journals. But much breath will go lost. And we have so little breath to lose.

PAUL ROSENFELD

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